SATURDAY SPECIAL
Alessandra de Rossi stands out in lackluster Singaporean thriller

SPORTS
Letran Knights put away NCAA championship

ACROSS/A15
Leader of striking Nestlé workers murdered in Calamba City

NEWS/A2
Psychiatric tests for Pinay murder suspect in Singapore

Luisita to fight gov't over stock contract cancellation

By Blandina S. Rivera

RASSION LUISITA WILL DEFINITELY NOT be a stroll in the argument fields for the Department of Agrarian Reform.

The management of Hacienda Luisita Inc. (HLI) is poised to fight government initiatives to revoke the stock distribution option (SDO)

LUISITA, A-17

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Coming soon from carabao laboratory: Guyito clone

RESEARCHERS SAY they are closer to creating the world's first clone of a water buffalo (carabao) that could eventually help raise productivity levels for millions of impoverished farmers.

CONTINUED ON PAGE A-17

mail: feedback@inquirer.com.ph
Saturday, September 24, 2005 ■ 28 pages / vol. 28 / no. 288
website: www.inq7.net

Emergency rule feared

PREGNANT Arroyo checks out the services available for residents at the NHMF Relocation Area in Bgy. Bigaay, Valenzuela. For instance, the Barangay Mina Canosa Compound provides dental and medical services. More NHMF residents were relocated from the squatter colonies along the old railroad tracks.

Opposition says DOJ drafted proclamation

AN OFFICIAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE has drafted a presidential proclamation that stops short of a declaration of martial law, according to opposition leaders, including former Solicitor General Frank Chavez and Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay.

Sought for comment, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said he had no report. "It's way off the mark. I don't think it [emergency rule]—was considered at all. It's a no-no," he said.

A spokesperson of opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson said: "We have not heard about it. We checked with a police general in Camp Crame and he has not heard anything about it. But it's still an option for President Macapagal-Arroyo."

Chavez told the Inquirer that seven of the draft proclamation were leaked to his group last night by a member of the staff of Senator Serge Nicolas, chief of staff of Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez.

It was Nicolas who drafted the proclamation, Chavez said, quoting Nicolas's staff member who, he said, was "stunned" by its contents.

Quoting the source, Chavez said the phrase "martial law" might or might not be used, "but the effect would be the same."

The proclamation would purportedly "invoke the powers of the Commander in Chief to ensure national security and interest" and would "effect the arrest of people critical of the government and ensuing public disorder."

Three independent sources, composed of relatives of GMA officials, confirmed this.

"Unless they change their mind or schedule, this will be implemented this weekend," said Chavez, who spoke with the Inquirer on the sidelines of a meet-

CONTINUED ON A-10

US report: Erap most acceptable successor

By Norman Bordadora

SHOULD PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo be compelled to step down in the face of questions on the legitimacy of her administration, who does "a senior US policy-maker" think is "the most down-to-earth and legally acceptable, political successor"?

SPECIAL REPORT

United President Joseph Estrada, "a popular opposition figure, and who continues to receive broad public support," according to an "informal assessment" August July 30 and prepared by the unnamed policy-maker.

The three-page report of the US Embassy in Manila also said

CONTINUED ON A-10

Gonzales case goes to high court

By Armand N. Nocum and TJ Burgonio

THE HEAD OF THE DEFENSION of National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales has reached the Supreme Court, with his camp asking the tribunal to order his immediate release.

In a nine-page petition for writ of habeas corpus, the Romulo Sauzal Flabea Gonzales Jr. Bureau—security and the detention order on her brother issued by the Senate blue ribbon committee was a "great violation" of his right to freedom of movement.

"Until continued detention will not improve national security, public safety or public health. Instead, it will impair national security

CONTINUED ON A-8

Church, business split on protest crackdown

By Ryncel M. Domingo and Christian V. Esguerra

LEADERS OF THE ROMAN Catholic Church and the business community—two influential institutions that could make or break President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration—are divided on Malacañang's plans to get tough on protests.

Their reactions yesterday reflected the differences within the institutions that surfaced in July at the height of the worst political crisis to engulf the 4-year-old Arroyo presidency.

The Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry supported Mr Arroyo, pleading with protesters in Makati that their actions were undermining investor perception of the country.

PCCI president Donald E. Dee said his group recognized the people's right of expression, especially in matters of national concern. "But I'm sure this could be done through other means and in other venues," Dee said.

He said that the protests were affecting business operations, more so the perception lead and less on things that could be quantified.

"We support the protesters' rights, but not to the point of scaring people away," he said, especially if the rallies occur often.

CONTINUED ON A-10

One of biggest exodus ever empties US Gulf Coast

HOUSTON—HURRICANE RITA roared toward the Texas and Louisiana coasts on Friday, a record-super-storm in a month that spurred a traffic-snarled exodus—and higher gasoline and fears it could cripple the heart of the country's petrochemical industry.

The Category 4 hurricane was barreling north-west across the Gulf of Mexico, with winds near 220 kph, the United States National Hurricane Center said. Rita was expected to make landfall late on Friday or early on Saturday but its destructive was unclear.

Nearly 2 million people along the Texas and Louisiana coasts were urged to get out of the way of Rita, a storm that weakened Thursday from a top of the scale Category 5 hurricane.

The US mainland has not been hit by two Category 4 storms in the same year since 1915. Rita has

CONTINUED ON A-10

UNPRECEDENTED Sight of people in advance of Hurricane Rita causes a traffic snarl on a highway out of the city of Lake Charles, Louisiana. The storm is expected to hit land by Saturday (Sunday here). The US mainland has not been hit by two Category 4 storms within a month of each other since 1915. Rita has come ashore by Aug. 29.

FRIENDS LIKE TERRORISTS Jarque with wife Xenia denounce the United States on arrival here on Friday.

Jarques back, hit raw deal in US

By Nikko Dizon

"I WENT TO AMERICA WITHOUT any conflict, nothing. I am 67 years old and Mrs. Jarque is 67 years old. How can we be involved in America?"

Retired Brig. Gen. Raymundo Jarque yesterday presented his frustration and desperation by United States immigration authorities for being an alleged "terrorist."

The couple arrived at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport shortly before 11 a.m. yesterday on a Korean Airlines flight from Los Angeles to a welcome from their son, Raymundo Jr., and other relatives, including the widow of their eldest son, Senior Capt. Rene Jarque.

"I strongly denounce one of the most treacherous acts done by the American security in the US Embassy here, members of the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation], CIA [Central Intelligence Agency], their Philippine friends and assets, and people manning the Department of Homeland Security," an angry Jarque told reporters on his return yesterday.

Jarque and his wife, Xenia, were held upon arrival from Manila at the Dallas airport in Texas on Tuesday, and deported to the Philippines the following day.

A report from the Philippine consul

CONTINUED ON A-8

A3
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2005

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: A range of rainy days, occasioned with the tropical cyclone overseas in Central Luzon. A weather is at its low to fairly and eastern seasons. Cool and the cooler seasons of Visayas.

Second FRONTPAGE

CRUSADER Lupeida, husband of murdered Susan Pacanga Lupeida, is flanked by his wife's aunt, Sally Pacanga, and Philippine Ambassador to Singapore, Raise Pole-Aviera as their way to court Friday.

A PROTESTER shows disgust during a picket by the Migrants at the Singaporean embassy in Makati City Friday.

MURDER IN SINGAPORE

Psychiatric tests for Guen; hubbies meet

SINGAPORE—A FILIPINO MAID ACCUSED of murdering a compatriot in Singapore and cutting up her body will be sent for psychiatric tests next week, her lawyer said yesterday.

Geen Agudo [illegible] who threw death by hanging if convicted of the murder of fellow Filipino maid Jane Lupeida, 26, was also ordered to be moved from police custody to the Changi Prison's Prison.

A number-looking Agudo made her third court appearance today and was ordered to show up again on Oct. 24.

Lupeida's severed head and limbs were found on Sept. 9 inside a sports bag left on a service gate in Singapore's Orchard Road shopping district. But torso was later found at a [illegible] park.

Defense lawyer Hooks Kuchan said he has been given full access to Agudo, who was examined hours after his gruesome discovery of the body parts, and upon from hours talking to her [illegible] but he would not disclose details.

"This morning the prosecution confirmed that they have finished the investigations into Guen's case," Kuchan told reporters. "She's now remanded at Changi Women's Prison and counseling will work, she will be taken to see [illegible] psychiatrist for evaluations."

Kuchan said it was premature to discuss details of the case.

He said speculation about the development of women in a love triangle seemed to be "over the top" on the part of the media.

"I don't think there is a tall, dark [illegible] man.

Any court single week we will release more evidence on a new topic. And remember we have not released anything about corruption yet. And you will be shocked at the magnitude of the amount involved. Into millions, but were talking about billions of pesos," he said during a [illegible] press conference in the Lucky Chinatown.

He said the opposition has to be presented only around 11 to 20 pieces of [illegible] evidence against Mr. Arroyo, and already majority of 80 [illegible] are not to stop her vote.

He also said the [illegible] of [illegible] whether or [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

EUPHORIA Jewapo over coach Louie Alas (top), the Letran Knights and their supporters.

SPORTS

Editor: Teodoro S. Matsunaga

Baseball facelift on

64 days to 23rd SEA Games

Knights rip Dolphins, put away NCAA title

By Jasmine W. Paya

AS THE FINAL BUZZER SOUNDED, LETRAN coach Louie Alas hugged his bunch of "blue-collar players."

None of them even made it to the Mythical Five, yet there they were with the NCAA basketball crown in hand.

Leading all the way, the Letran Knights showcased another balanced effort to blast the defending champion Philippine Christian U Dolphins, 82-54, yesterday in their do-or-die title match at the Araneta Coliseum.

Finals Most Valuable Player Reyjet Bautista, Most Improved Player James Alao and 2F Mamar delivered 13 points apiece for the Knights, who clinched their 14th basketball title.

But there were others who deserved credit, including forward Jonathan Aldave and big men Fredrick Rodriguez and co-host 7 Malt Medoza.

"They never stopped working hard," said Alas after the top-seeded Knights delivered a thrilling finish to their phenomenal 16-1 elimination round.

"We practiced day in and day out," added Alas, who also steered the Knights' 1998 and 2003 championship runs. "We sometimes even practice thrice a day. Everyone knew hard, you'll never lose anything from them. They really showed resiliency and toughness."

"We really wanted to win, not just for the school but for our players who will graduate this year," said the 21-year-old Bautista.

And indeed, the duties was evident right from the tipoff. The Knights busted their tongue early on, with Bautista opening with a three-pointer to spark a 7-1 count.

With their methodical attack, the Knights continue to flaunt their double-digit advantage, 22-22, midway in the second period.

The Dolphins shadow, led by Defensive Player of the Year Gabby Espinas, fought hard but could get only to within two points at 42-44.

Espinas, who averaged 10.0 points and 11.5 rebounds in the first two games of the best-of-three series, finished with 11 markers and eight boards.

"They were very tough," said Alas of coach Aurel Bucsko's wards. "People were saying that we can beat PCU, but it was easier said than done. They came out aggressive."

The Dolphins clubbed Game 1 with a 79-74 triumph last Monday. Two days later, the Knights evened the series at 1-1 with a masterful 79-60 Game 2 victory.

The scores:

LETRAN (82)—Alao 13, Bautista 13, Alcantara 11, Rodriguez 8, Aurin 6, Aldave 6, Pilar 6, Antipas 2, Andan 2.

PCU (54)—Espinas 11, Gan 11, Nebija 7, Castro 5, Cain 4, Sulpa 4, Cecilio 4, Arcamon 3, Nuñez 2, Sabanpan 2.

Quarters: 23-13, 38-33, 61-44, 82-54.

Baseball facelift on

MOST DAYS TO BE A FIELD OF DIRT THAT now becomes an oasis as workers rush to finish the facelift of the Rizal Memorial baseball stadium for the coming 23rd Southeast Asian Games. Baseball will be held in the Games for the first time and the Philippines is almost bomb-dyner bet to make the gold medal. Close to three dozen workers are busy working on the field. A couple were even painting the walls where the names of baseball legends Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig are posted after being honors there decades ago.

* * *

The Philippine Sports Commission has increased the daily meal allowances of athletes to P250. But the amount is being used by some athletes to also provide meals for their families because of poverty. Each national athlete has been earning another P6,000 monthly since last year as training subsidy. Manny R. Castillo

Distributed by Newspaper Times

chief

By Luige del Puerto

RECENT HIGH-PROfile raids of shabu laboratories in the country have prompted drug syndicates to import methamphetamine hydrochloride, popularly known as shabu, instead of manufacturing the banned substance here, according to the police's anti-narcotics czar.

"I'm not saying there are no more shabu laboratories here," said Director Marcelo Ele Jr., head of the PNP Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Task Force. "The drug laboratories might still be there, but they might not be operating," he pointed out.

Ele said the risk of operating here has become higher for drug syndicates. "One, they will not risk exposing their chemists. Two, the risk of smuggling the drugs in is lesser," he said.

The logical conclusion, he said, is for drug syndicates to import finished products to sustain their multibillion-peso business.

In recent years, the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency has dismantled drug laboratories in the country which are some of the biggest in Southeast Asia.

Since 2002, PDEA, working closely with the police and other law enforcement agencies, has seized nearly P40 billion worth of illegal drugs, chemicals and equipment, and uncovered some 30 clandestine laboratories and 21 chemical warehouses nationwide.

Ele said his office has already coordinated with the Bureau of Customs, the Bureau of Immigration, and other government agencies in charge of securing the country's air and seaports, adding these are where the action would be.

PDEA chief at Jade Vine affair today

UNDERSECRETARY Anselmo S. Avenido Jr., director general of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, will be the guest of honor and keynote speaker at the Philippine Woman's Christian Temperance Union Inc. (PWCTU) 76th anniversary celebration today at 2 p.m. at the Jade Vine Executive Inn, United Nations Avenue, Ermita, Manila.

The theme of this year's affair is "Strengthening PWCTU-NGO Partnership Against Drugs, Alcohol and Smoking."

Avenido will be introduced by Villa Granada de Guia, PWCTU national president. Sharon Rose Duremdes, general secretary of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, will deliver the inspirational message and invocation.

Following the speeches will be a musical program and election of new PWCTU officers.

The PCU Kalinangan Dance Troupe, the Salvation Army, the Parañaque IEMELIF Chancel Choir and Adelaida Sebastian will render musical numbers.

A high of 171 SEAG golds for RP—Philsoc

By Mayang R. Candilo

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, THE PHILIPPINES EXPECTS 70 rake a high of 171 gold medals and a haul of 200 medals good enough to easily win overall championship honors in the coming 23rd Southeast Asian Games.

This was the bold prediction made by the Philippine SEAG Organizing Committee (Philsoc) technical committee yesterday after getting reports from the 39 National Sports Associations that will vie seven in the Games.

Fanny slugging, the Philsoc technical committee chair and president of the national football association of the Philippines, announced during the Sports Commission Organization of the Philippines (Scrop) session at the Sulteam that he is merely repeating a report he made to the expanded Philippine Olympic Committee session meeting held last Wednesday.

"This information is (also) out in honest to goodness assessment made by the NSA presidents themselves," Angping said. "We at the technical committee are in no position to no believe (this) assessment."

Angping echoed a similar assessment by POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, who said that the Philippines is capable of winning at least 150 gold medals.

A total of 910 gold medals will be contested in 11 sports in the Games slated Dec. 27 to Jan. 5, and the Philippines is aiming to win no less than the overall championship in the 44-year hosting of the SEAG.

2 more Air21 aces going to Purefoods

By Jose Navarro

AIR21 IS POISED TO GET ANOTHER WELL-hill of first round picks in the next Philippine Basketball Association rookie draft.

The Express acquired a future first round pick from the Purefoods Chunkee Giants after sending Mars Jose Magsi and Egay Billones to the San Miguel Corp.-owned ballclub, a source told the Inquirer yesterday.

"Both parties have already agreed in principle," said the source. "They are just awaiting for the signature of a San Miguel top-level management official to seal the deal."

By unloading the 6-foot-5 Pangin and playmaker Billones, the Express have trimmed down their lineup to 12 players while getting another pick which they could use to snag another marketable amateur in the draft.

The Purefoods-Chunkee has the option when to let Air21 get its pick in 2006 or 2007.

Sources said, however, the deal was just the initial step in Purefoods' bid to secure a big name of its choice from a cross ballclub.

It's no secret that Purefoods coach Ryan Gregorio is in need of a power forward to step up to fill up the vacant hole in his middle.

Harshly reports said getting Cone-Coke's Ali Peek was one of the options being considered.

Most elite teams are prohibited from swapping players, Air21 could be used as a conduit to circumvent a deal between Coca-Cola and Purefoods.

Olivarez pulls rug from under Aussie

By Marc Anthony Reyes

FINALLY, SOME GOOD NEWS FROM PHILIPPINE TENNIS.

Pablo Olivarez II showcased his vast potential as a future Filipino ace by shocking top-seed Wilhem McKenzie of Australia, 6-3, 6-2, yesterday in the quarterfinals of the Pilipinas-JTV junior tennis championship.

No. 2 seed Miguel Lorenzo Moreno also bottled his quarterfinal assignment by beating out Ramon Clint Wee while, 6-4, 6-3, but unranked Andrew Tan Yu-howed out to sixth seed Japanese Toshiyo Sasaki, 6-3, 6-0.

The 13-year-old Olivarez, grandson of Philippine Tennis Association dean Pablo Olivarez Sr., got a chance to avenge Tan Yu's loss when he takes on Sasaki in the semifinals.

A consistent age-group champ, the fifth-seed Olivarez is the nephew of former ATP team stalwart Jose Olivarez, a former SEA Games gold medalist. He is set to fly to Spain to represent the country in the Junior Davis Cup tie.

Moreno advanced in the semifinals against Lee Yong-hun of Taiwan, who ranked No. 7 Indonesian Lutfi Theodore, 6-2, 6-1.

In the girls' singles, top-seed Filipina-Australian Denise Dy downed No. 8 Stephanie Vogt of Liechtenstein, 6-2, 6-3, to forge a semifinal showdown with 10-Spanish rebel Sara Ruiz Sanz.

The same battle between the foreign-based Filipinas is expected to draw interest considering that the two are hoping to land spots on the national team for the Southeast Asian Games.

Balangui, veteran parents had from Binguinton, started sixth-seeded local Rosalie Gaela Isla Sclesia, 7-6 (2), 6-2.

OLIVAREZ—Stunning victory for RP tennis

Gejon enjoys physical edge over WBA title foe

UNLIKELY TILL FOR A MISSHAPENED IT, Filipino Orlando "Pablo" Gejon will enjoy height and reach advantage when he puts for the World Boxing Association's (OLD) title of Japan's Yutaka Hida tomorrow in Yokohama.

The middleweight, 5-foot-9 1/2 Gejon was usually taller rather and had a four-inch edge in reach over the 5-2 Hida during their medical examination Thursday afternoon.

Despite his physical advantages, Filipino ring icon Manny Pacquiao said Gejon (27-8-3 with 13 knockouts) should match the expected aggressiveness of Hida, who is making the third defense of his crown before a partisan crowd.

Gejon should use "more" and movements if he wants to become victorious, all-around fighter," Pacquiao said in an interview before he left for Japan to cheer for the Filipino challenger.

"Gejon may overestimate taking risks. He's very game during normal long (the four-to-three combinations and not single punches)," Pacquiao said, throwing short punches into an imaginary target.

Pacquiao took a Philippine Airlines flight bound for Tokyo, accompanied by his wife Jinkee and Gejon's manager Ben "Wakie" Sabal and some friends. Sabal will, Lagunday, Coordinator

PACQUIAO

RP tracksters facing juniors?

A HEAVY COLLEGE MEN HIGHLIGHT with the traverse and he won't be surprised if Manila president Go Teng Kok achieves his medal forecast for the Manila Southeast Asian Games set to end Dec. 27 this year.

"Gimme gold medals, if my memory serves me right," the volunteer said. "(Ti) will get (at least) quite a bit of gold medals."

This is because Malaysia and Thailand, Southeast Asia's athletic powers, will not be sending their junior athletes to compete. Mr. colleague said he got the info from the lowers.

"The coaches of the two countries said the athletes will be coming here to train, the SEA Games being the lowest level of competition in the continent, according to them. I know these two coaches personally," the strike said.

POC representative Wenn Ebuldo did not explain why he did not level too optimistic about the outcome of POC president Peping Cojuangco's reaction to the Filo basketballers in Switzerland.

Ebuldo did mention, however, that Filo secretary general Fernando Hanonson probably has all the clippings of the media attacks on the Filo which were published in Philippine newspapers.

Cojuangco and POC chair Robert Aventajado are flying to Geneva next week to seek the lifting of the Filo ban on the Philippines.

It was Ebuldo who accompanied the meeting.

* * *

Virtuoso Sidney Sibez, who staged the duo Ateneo-La Salle Season Game during his stint at the Ateneo, has moved his team between major national meets.

"Do you realize that we first did this 20 years ago? We're doing it again on Dec. 9—it (9th and 4 UAAP-caped) finals both schools will play against each other, with a legends game serving as opening," said Sibez.

Slotter in Greenhills, a restaurant-Subong owner, is concerned, as remain days, into a sports bar of sorts where 2005 UAAP games are shown live on a wide screen.

* * *

"Who can Beato who other hands words against EE? The player (some?) opened from the e-mail sent by Deb Bauzi, obviously a DE absentee.

"Last year, when the UAAP awarded the Goodwill to the 'best fifth to Nonie Feruzzo, in spite of the fact that his younger brother Beato had been voted the winner, did anybody hear anything from us?

"I'm sure most people will agree with me if I say that Beato was far more deserving.

IN HUDDLE

Mark Cadiz

imagine a bunch of rookie players being led by a rookie coach to the UAAP Final Four. Such accomplishment is far greater than a 7-8 record for the second rounder by a team which had Mark Cardona and some outstanding veterans in its lineup. I just hope Dindo will be given the recognition that's due to the year."

* * *

Glenmar Nicolasora (is he Filipinized?), Cantown Gov Officer of SEI Asia Commerce Info Pte. Ltd, and "a big (6th for) of third three decades," sent us an e-mail with a long list of questions and comments.

For starters, Jun asked his concern about the doubleday PBA schedule. "Does consecutive Sat/Sun has a program to overcome the downhill trend?" he asked. "Marketing man Andy Tanseco has to be more innovative to bring back the fans. Dude has quit the PBA and joined Asian Sports, where he says he's happier," and the quality of the games should also be improved."

Was I a lover of the late Shell Coach involving marquee players Tony de Leon and Bob Alberts, his wanted to know, he said he heard that P50 million was included in the package which, he thought, was unfair to the other teams.

"Gabe nanuon ang gimuon ng Shell, because it was only Alaska that benefited from the deal. Alaska kept ang pinakbet nila. Pero talagar yun, sa Buddy Encarnado of Sta. Ana ba?

* * *

First, Gie inquired about the quality of this conference's imports. The current batches, he said, "is not genuine excitement at all. Gone are the days of the blind-pairing Walker Russell, Tony "Hurricane" Harris, Dexter Shouse, Mike Davis, Terrence Rudd, Carlos Briggs, etc..."

The quality of the All-Star Game could also stand some improvement. Tip to how Gie and PBA rogers do not know how to play in the All-Stars.

Asking if I could please interview rookie Alex Gallagher, Gie reports that his nephew has played with the 19 Aces in the US and has raved his skills and talent as "way above that of Mark Caguioa."

Senate votes to probe Northrail project

By TJ Burgonio

AFTER A DELAY OF SEVEN MONTHS, the Senate is to finally open an inquiry into the controversial $503-million Northrail project, the joint undertaking with China to rehabilitate the 32-km. rail connection between Caloocan and Bulacan.

Voting unanimously, senators adopted late Wednesday Sen. Jinggoy Estrada's motion to convene the Senate into a committee of the whole to look into the contract between the North Luzon Railways Corp. and a Chinese state firm to modernize the project.

The inquiry will start next Thursday, according to a staff member at the office of Senate President Franklin Drilon.

"The purpose of the inquiry is to shed light on the controversy," Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan said but declined to discuss other details of the inquiry.

He said Drilon was the one responsible for serving the terms of the inquiry, such as deciding the date of the first hearing, drawing up the list of resource persons and sending out the invitations.

Estrada delivered a privilege speech in February, denouncing the contract's allegedly onerous terms, particularly the award of the contract to the China National Machinery and Equipment Corp. Group (CNMEC) without public bidding.

Drilon, who is no China fan, has claimed that the Northrail project was one of the "colossal corrupt deals" of the Arroyo administration. He said it was a major reason for his withdrawal of support for the President last July.

The Northrail contract was one of the cases that pro-impeachment legislators planned to present at the impeachment trial of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The North Luzon Railway Corp. and CNMEC signed the contract to build the railway in December 2003.

Under the agreement, China's Export-Import Bank would bankroll the project with a $400-million loan and the Philippine government would put up a counterpart fund of $105-million.

The 32.128-km. dual-track railway stretches from Caloocan City north to Malolos in Bulacan along the old route of the Philippine National Railways system.

This section, making up the first phase the Northrail project will have stations in Caloocan, Valenzuela City, Marilao, Bocaue, and Guiguinto and Malolos.

The next phase of the project will run from Malolos to the Clark Special Economic Zone in Pampanga province.

The rail system will use diesel-powered commuter trains that can bring passengers to their destinations in 37 minutes from end to end for a minimum fare of P15, and P1 for every kilometer thereafter for a total fare of P40, according to Northrail executives.

Bicol mayor in hot water over 'jueteng'

TIWI, ALBAY – THE vice mayor of this town, together with other local officials, have filed graft charges before the Office of the Ombudsman against their own mayor for allegedly allowing the illegal numbers game, "jueteng," to proliferate in their town.

Vice Mayor Ruth Cortal accused Mayor Jaime Villasteros of violating RA 3019 (the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act), RA 6713 (Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Employees and Public Officials) and RA 9287 (the anti-jueteng law).

Villasteros was the first elected official to be charged before the Ombudsman for violating the law against jueteng.

Cortal also filed administrative charges against Villasteros and sought his preventive suspension.

In her complaint, Cortal alleged that the operator of jueteng in Tiwi was Villasteros's elder brother, Nelson.

She said it was Villasteros himself who informed her and the Tiwi municipal council sometime in July 2004 of Nelson's plan to start jueteng operations in the town.

"Despite my constant presentations and those of various operators, including one local Catholic Church, against the proliferation of the illegal number game in our municipality, Mayor Villasteros remained unmindful and told former, as if nothing [illegal was going on]...," Cortal said.

Nelson P. Flores

Metro rallies: Different strokes for different folks

By Margaux C. Orris

IN JOSEFINA RIVERA'S MARKET in an opposition stronghold, Las Piñas's Manila is an administration bailiwick.

"From the start, the city government of Manila has maintained that permission must first notify us to coordinate their activities with the police and protect the interest of the majority," Atienza said in a phone interview.

The Manila mayor explained that rules must be observed not to prevent the disruption of traffic and ensure the security of the rally participants.

"We cannot take risks because the government would be blamed if something happened to those protesters, considering the possible presence of terrorists during these activities," Atienza said. "We cannot allow anarchy to prevail, especially when it affects students, students, and other residents who do not wish to participate in the rally."

Atienza said that President Macapagal-Arroyo only wanted order and security in the streets with her latest pronouncement.

"I'm sure she is not forbidding rallies but taking plans, but for the protesters to secure permits from the city government and the police first before holding their activities," the mayor said.

In Quezon City, Mayor Sonny Belmonte said he would not issue rally permits to both militants and moderates "subject to certain conditions." It was up to the police, however, to disperse militants who failed to produce a permit, he said.

Belmonte said an application for a permit to rally would be denied, if, for instance, there was a threat of violence, or it would disrupt traffic or threaten security.

Quezon City Police District director Arturo Ducat from Nicanor Parañas Jr. called the "maximum tolerance policy" was no longer in effect for demonstrations.

"There are laws [mentioned that some groups do not have a permit, we'll inform them that the city government has one of, lowest the rally, and there can down to hour," he said.

If the protesters resist, they will be charged with "direct assault," he said.

Weekend rallies only on Edsa

Mayor Reynaldo Gonzales of Mandaluyong says violators in the mayor's order to regulate demonstrations "will forget their rights to hold protests but protesters also have to recognize the power of the government to regulate," said Gonzales.

He said rallies could be held on weekends or when they would not affect commuters in the city that uses the massive Megalink Internet cables in 1998 and 2000 on Edsa that routed Internet through Ferdinand Marcos and Joseph Estrada.

Navotas Mayor Tobias Tiangco said he supported the no-permit, no-rally policy "as long as it is not over the opposition, was about the law. He said Navotas would give equal treatment to groups opposed to or supportive of the Arroyo administration.

But he said the distribution of water police might to stop Tiangco added that local governments should still allow protest actions in freedom parks, as peaceful assembly was the people's constitutional right.

Caloocan City ombudsman of Sec. Alvin Feliciano said rallies with no permits would no longer be tolerated in the city as ordered by Mayor Enrico Echiverri.

But the city will issue permits without discrimination.

Valenzuela City administrator Astrin Bautista said the same position, saying permits were a requisite for demonstrations in the city.

In southern Metro Manila, officials predict rallies are rare, the rule of unlicensed protests, response would not be a problem.

No problem in Pasay

"We don't have rallies here that's why we have no problem with that," said Pasay City Mayor Wenceslao "Peewee" Trinidad. However, he admitted that some groups were getting out of control during protests actions that there was a need to contain them.

"Those [protesters] should police their own ranks," the mayor said.

In Marikina City, Mayor Jaime Fresnedi said he would allow rallies. "The more you suppress them, the more they will explode in your presence," the mayor said. But he said protesters must avoid any untoward incidents and provocations.

For Taguig City Mayor Freddie Tinga, there should be a "give-and-take process" between the officials and the public.

The mayor believed that civil rights must be given the opportunity to express their grievances "but there must be order." With reports from Ma. Elena L. Bautista, Jeannette I. Andrade, Jaime Fresnedi, Jeff Zabala, Ana Santos, city's Public Information Office head.

Pasalamat City Mayor Pureza Rodriguez said they have not seen the police use a Mabalacat City Director, the local government would "issue likely go down" if a "give-and-take process" between the officials and the public.

'There'll be blood in the streets'

By Juliet Labog Javellana

WARNING BLOOD WILL spill in the streets, opponents of President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday threatened to take their protest to the Palace gate if her standard-bearer on disarmament.

"Violence begets violence. There will be blood in the streets," said Sen. Jinggoy Estrada.

Left-wing politicians said they would not be intimidated. "We will challenge her in Congress, in courts and the streets. We, Presidents, are not in Manila," said Bayan Muna Rep. Teodoro Casiño.

Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay said Mr Arroyo's recent was "indicative of a dictator in the making."

Binay branded as "unacceptable and increasingly popular move to oust her."

Responding to Makati Binay's fears that protests in Makati were causing off potential investors, Binay said that this was "a small price to pay for democracy."

"Economic concerns can never be above legal or moral ones ... that is tantamount to allowing businessmen and companies to break laws and morality in the name of profit."

On Thursday, Mr. Arroyo announced a get-tough policy against protests three weeks after her allies in Congress jumbled impeachment cases against her for allegedly stealing last year's election. She specifically referred to rallies in Makati, where some 40,000 people massed to July at the height of demands for her resignation.

"The need of banning the bully around the schoolyard," the 59-year-old President said. She said the policy of maximum tolerance had been abused and she would not allow this to continue "in the name of the peace and order and the welfare of the greater majority."

On Wednesday, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita announced that the government was enforcing the "rule of attributed preemptive response in lieu of maximum tolerance."

The bigger bully

Sen. Panfilo Lacson said Mr. Arroyo's threat gave him more reason to join protests.

"Mr. Arroyo is the bigger bully," Lacson said. "She is the one who declared a 'maximum tolerance' policy."

Estrada said that President Macapagal-Arroyo only wanted order and security in the streets with her latest pronouncement.

"I'm sure she is not forbidding rallies but taking plans, but for the protesters to secure permits from the city government and the police first before holding their activities," the mayor said.

In Quezon City, Mayor Sonny Belmonte said he would not issue rally permits to both militants and moderates "subject to certain conditions." It was up to the police, however, to disperse militants who failed to produce a permit, he said.

Belmonte said an application for a permit to rally would be denied, if, for instance, there was a threat of violence, or it would disrupt traffic or threaten security.

Weekend rallies only on Edsa

Mayor Reynaldo Gonzales of Mandaluyong says violators in the mayor's order to regulate demonstrations "will forget their rights to hold protests but protesters also have to recognize the power of the government to regulate," said Gonzales.

He said rallies could be held on weekends or when they would not affect commuters in the city that uses the massive Megalink Internet cables in 1998 and 2000 on Edsa that routed Internet through Ferdinand Marcos and Joseph Estrada.

Navotas Mayor Tobias Tiangco said he supported the no-permit, no-rally policy "as long as it is not over the opposition, was about the law. He said Navotas would give equal treatment to groups opposed to or supportive of the Arroyo administration.

But he said the distribution of water police might to stop Tiangco added that local governments should still allow protest actions in freedom parks, as peaceful assembly was the people's constitutional right.

Caloocan City ombudsman of Sec. Alvin Feliciano said rallies with no permits would no longer be tolerated in the city as ordered by Mayor Enrico Echiverri.

But the city will issue permits without discrimination.

Valenzuela City administrator Astrin Bautista said the same position, saying permits were a requisite for demonstrations in the city.

In southern Metro Manila, officials predict rallies are rare, the rule of unlicensed protests, response would not be a problem.

No problem in Pasay

"We don't have rallies here that's why we have no problem with that," said Pasay City Mayor Wenceslao "Peewee" Trinidad. However, he admitted that some groups were getting out of control during protests actions that there was a need to contain them.

"Those [protesters] should police their own ranks," the mayor said.

In Marikina City, Mayor Jaime Fresnedi said he would allow rallies. "The more you suppress them, the more they will explode in your presence," the mayor said. But he said protesters must avoid any untoward incidents and provocations.

For Taguig City Mayor Freddie Tinga, there should be a "give-and-take process" between the officials and the public.

The mayor believed that civil rights must be given the opportunity to express their grievances "but there must be order." With reports from Ma. Elena L. Bautista, Jeannette I. Andrade, Jaime Fresnedi, Jeff Zabala, Ana Santos, city's Public Information Office head.

Pasalamat City Mayor Pureza Rodriguez said they have not seen the police use a Mabalacat City Director, the local government would "issue likely go down" if a "give-and-take process" between the officials and the public.

Emergency rule feared, says opposition

From page A1

ing mob other members of the opposition.

"We hope it's not true, but we have credible information that the DOJ has prepared this proclamation, which was ordered drafted by the President when she was abroad," Binay said the reason shortly before he was to go on television with a rare interview session.

He said "immediate fact" tended to lend credibility to the report. He said Malacañang's announcement on Thursday of a crackdown on anti-government rallies.

Binay said Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita's few weeks ago that martial law or emergency rule was always an option open to the President to quell destabilization moves against her administration.

"If true, that's the embodiment of a declaration of martial law," Binay said.

7 pages

Chavez said the arrest order and the list of people to be arrested were contained in another document. He said the number in the list, contained in three pages, was read to his group by three sources in the DOJ.

Asked which would come first, the proclamation or the arrests, an opposition leader who requested anonymity said: "We've heard PGMA [Gloria Macapagal Arroyo] say that DOJ first then will invade first." When the tanks were already there."

By Chavez's account, President Macapagal-Arroyo phoned Gonzalez when she was in the United States to preside over the United Nations Security Council summit and ordered the list World summit.

The source secretary then phoned Mendez, Chavez said.

Asked what could have precipitated Ms Arroyo's supposed instruction to Gonzalez, Chavez theorized that a briefing by US officials could have done it.

"That just cannot organize dissent with rebellion," he said, adding:

"If the President declares martial law, she would have the upper hand in the first 48 hours.

"If the rallyists won't push, meaning are have successfully preempted it, it would be a breather."

Asked if it was possible that Ms Arroyo merely wanted to formulate her successor in the just few days regarding direct protests, Chavez said: "The proclamation is far more serious than keeping power not under it was meant to still disarm."

He also pointed out that even if the President were to say that she was issuing the proclamation for "the public good and public safety," there would have to be an "actual rebellion or invasion" to justify it.

Suspension

Coincidentally, Binay said he had also received reports that he would soon be suspended in course of Makati in connection with the Makati "ghost employees" case.

"My suspension is meant to stop me from issuing a permit to rally in Makati," he said. Reports from Gerry Lirio and Cecille Suerte Felipe

US report: Erap most acceptable successor

From page A1

"most political observers" viewed Mr Arroyo as "a weak, massive leader whose technocratic footings, oligarchic upbringing, and personality projection of style and inability to resonate with ordinary Filipinos" had kept her popularity ratings low "in a country that reviews warm and outgoing personalities."

The report added that Mr Arroyo's entry in the 2004 election was "tainted with credible rumors of corruption and vote buying, leaving her legitimacy once again in question ..."

They has weakened her "ability to function effectively in a personality based political environment," it said.

A copy of the report, along with copies of other US Embassy documents, was obtained by the Inquirer from a source who asked not to be named.

Profile

The US government appeared to be interested in Estrada that the embassy prepared a profile of him dated Aug. 26 and included in it a Malaysian official's expression of concern over power in the Philippines if President were to take over from Ms Arroyo.

Malaysian Special Intelligence Organization (MSIO) director general Othman Abdul Razak was aware that his comments would reach the US government and may have been meant to influence as well as inform," said the profile on Estrada, which was prepared by a contact Indira.

It added: "In late July 2005, comment-ing on the political difficulties being faced by Mrs Arroyo, ... Othman stated that if Estrada lost power, her departure would be detrimental to the ongoing peace process with the MILF [Moro Islamic Liberation Front], if Estrada succeeded the presidency."

The profile contained Estrada's background as a movie actor and his pro-poor programs. More importantly for the American, it discussed what his policies that were taken with the US agencies in the region.

"Estrada publicly voiced support for the ratification of the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement, and the all-out war against the separatist MILF and the extremist Abu Sayyaf in Mindanao.

The profile also said Estrada's administration attended to allow foreigners to buy and own land and to allow foreign investors to build casinos.

"Estrada insisted these [were] the only ways to get the country's economy moving forward," the profile said.

Political resurgence

The Aug. 26 profile also questioned the manner in which Ms Arroyo came to power in January 2001 was Estrada.

"Succeeding to the presidency, the latter of power to Estrada's successor—that Ms President Macapagal-Arroyo—has caused a more complex question as to whether the manner in which this change in leadership was constitutional," it said.

The profile said Ms Arroyo "remained highly unpopular" about Estrada.

The Estrada electorate appeared buoyed by [his] seeming political reemergence. Most observers maintained that despite Estrada's condition, being in prison or house arrest, on trial for plunder, he remains an influential and card in the Philippine politics," it said.

It also said Estrada's popular appeal had increased greatly since the left office.

"Ahead of his medical condition still more from poor source," it noted.

The profile also related Estrada's recent declining fortunes, pointed by Dr. Soedjatmoko, an expert on a possible "unconstitutional" shift in the administration.

Estrada was on his best behavior during the recent birthday celebration of Bro. Mike Velarde. El Shaddai charismatic leader," the profile said, adding:

"The court has scheduled a bill of indictable, releasing the former leader for a medical checkup and reconciliation parade with the current administration."

The new leaders always shared the stage for a possible symbolic handshake during the gathering of the Blood Pact, but Estrada allegedly delayed but an final until Ms Arroyo had left.

Appeal

But the July 26 embassy report said Estrada would be more successful if he started to represent a "wider" portion of the population.

"Estrada's appeal will be limited until he is seen as a more moderate option representing the interests of a wider cross-section of the electorate, besides the country's marginalized sectors or mass," it said.

The report quoted political experts as suggesting that "an successful execution of power has occurred with-

out an obvious successor in place."

"Of those within Macapagal-Arroyo's formal coalition, or among like-minded politicians whose ambitions may tempt them to succeed her, none has emerged as a political backing or ... to sustain a campaign to oust her," it added.

The report mentioned Sen. Panfilo Lacson, but noted that the perception of him was less than complimentary. "Ultimately his leadership role in the military, [he] is seen by various opposition factions as being out for his own interests and holding the resources and [machinery] to make the President's opponents."

Plots to seize power

In an April 14 report, prepared follow-ing the dismissal of the last Fernando Poe Jr.'s electoral protest against Ms Arroyo, the US Embassy says Malacañang was "plagued" by "plots to seize power, including some purportedly to be staged by the opposition led by Estrada.

It also observed: "While few opposed anything to come out of [Poe's electoral protest, many who supported Poe's candidacy believe that the dismissal of the case would lead to genuine public outpouring of affection and grief, and would revive memories of Poe's death [in December 2004]."

Further on, the report said: "It is certainly to [the] Filipinos' interest to support the Macapagal-Arroyo government and also per se end to the political issues against Estrada. Electoral reform, however hastily needed, will go nowhere unless Filipinos want it—and fight for it."

Church ...

From page A1

On the other hand, Makati Business Club Executive Director Godfrey Gutierrez said rallies were expected when people were marching for truth.

He said the putting on hold of the impeachment complaints against Mr. Arroyo promised the resolution of the nation's political controversy. He said Filipinos who wanted a resolution of the crisis were now turning to the streets. He said he wanted the rallies to maintain peaceful.

Raul T. Concepcion, an industrialist and member of MBC's board of trustees, said protesters should go elsewhere or they should not occupy both lanes of Ayala Avenue.

"Many businesses have their headquarters in Makati and they cannot do anything if the entirety of the location is lost when those attending could not move from place to place because of the rallies," Concepcion said.

Conflicting Church views

Archbishops Oscar Cruz and Orlando Quevedo, both former presidents of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), yesterday gave contrasting positions on Malacañang's announced "preemptive calibrated response" to protesters.

Cruz said he supported the dismissal of Ms Arroyo if she suppressed street protests.

"Human marches, noise barrages, public rallies are but expression of exasperation," he said in a statement. "These are the evils—not the causes—of socio-political instability," he said.

"There are serious questions about the President's alleged lying, cheating and stealing," he told the Inquirer. "But she responds to them precisely by not answering them."

Unless she allowed street protests, the bishop argued, Ms Arroyo would be paving the way of the last dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

Cruz said Malacañang's new policy would weaken institutions of human rights.

"Such a response has already been tried before for so many Martial Law years," he said. "Then, the military became the judge as there was no longer a civilian court. The protests were safe and well."

Cruz reflected a minority view in the CBCP. Quevedo had a different opinion.

Ideological ploy

"To search for truth in the streets or through a so-called people's court seems to be mere political and even ideological ploy" the Cotabato archbishop said in a strongly-worded statement.

"The many failed efforts to get people out into the streets demonstrate the weariness of people regarding the naked political and ideological agenda of organizers and sponsors," he said. "People are indifferent and do not respond to the call of the opposition to go out into the streets."

Such indifference, he said, "may also mean that they may not totally believe in the so-called truth presented by the opposition."

Cruz also didn't share Quevedo's view of a "people's power" revolt saying "it is not a matter in search of truth to the fifth clearance of present government agencies to go for redress."

"It is time to claim that peaceful assemblies have nothing to use any direction," he argued. "It is also false to assert that any popular ethical has no room for the exercise of the Constitution and social tolerance. They are people willing answers in serious socio-moral questions."

Creative ways

Quevedo said legal experts should instead "come together and reflect on possible but creative ways by which the search for truth would be pursued in accordance with the rule of law and the Constitution."

Quevedo's statement echoed the Sept. 13 statement of the CBCP permanent council that encouraged the public to examine the search for truth while addressing the problem of grinding poverty in the country.

"All politicians must face this problem squarely," he said. "They have to act together but not in the streets. They have to act together to resolve political bickering and distrust."

However, many religious groups differ from the CBCP stand. They are actively calling for the resignation of Ms Arroyo.

CAÑARE

DEL ROSARIO

Cañare, Del Rosario strike in HK bowling

ALEX CAÑARE AND LIZA DEL ROSARIO, BOTH MEMbers of the Southeast Asia Games-bound Philippine bowling team, shone with victories in two international tournaments in Hong Kong recently.

Cañare won the 21st Hong Kong International Open, her first international title this year, by beating Asia's No. 2 bowler Chai of Malaysia twice in the final duel of the step-ladder finals.

Del Rosario ruled the ABF Tour Hong Kong leg, beating another Malaysian, Lai Kin Syuh, in the finals.

Finishing second after 36 games, Cañare outdueled Hong Kong's Vanessa Fung and blew defending champion Patty Arnin (of Indonesia) to earn a crack at Chai.

Cañare, sponsored by Hondo, Dexter and MTRA, won the first match against Chai, 196-176, and was even more impressive in her clinching 214-202 victory.

Del Rosario, on the other hand, survived a tough draw for three rounds to reach the finals in the 48th Tour leg.

She downed Satoh Yuji of Malaysia in the first round, 186-137, and then beat Fung, 214-199. She crushed the finals by tripping Foohen Choy of Malaysia, 196-169.

La previous month in the finals, losing 223-195 to Del Rosario, who is being supported by Columbia 300, Cesaro Asia, Propainter, Hopers Paints, Rigel Asia, Dexter and Power Bowl Bowling Center.

Shin Akkharavan and Jitsa Sed, both from THAILAND, also shone in the Cooked Division.

Akkharavan, PowerBowl's assistant manager and a student at St. Paul College Ilong, earned his second international title by winning the Cooked Men's title with an average of 208, beating 22-other finalists. He also won the Akkarvan Cooked Masters last April. Sed managed 205 to finish second to Hong Kong's Cashnet Chong among the women.

Nomura bets end up behind Thais

Final scores:

SAITA, JAPAN – THE PHILIPPINES sputtered with a closing 4-over-par 220 to finish joint 10th again Friday, even as Australia maintained its domination of the Nomura Cup with a 24-under-victory over New Zealand.

Antonio Monalawi and Jose Pagunsan each carded 72s and Jay Aquino added a 73 as the Filipinos, using the reverse-cup gauge of their worth in the evening Southeast Asian Games, ended up seven strokes behind fourth-placer Thailand and five over with Malaysia at 868.

"Pagunsan and Monalawi just didn't click together," said national team coach Greg Lopez. "We didn't have much luck, because for us to contend, they both have to do their at-will on their best days."

Australia proved a cut above the rest as it won many with the course for the second straight time, closing out with a record 397 for 854 to beat New Zealand by 17 shots.

PAGUNSAN: Big round just once

Andrew Tampion fired a 65, Andrew Dodt shot a 67 and Hamish Alexander-Lee Nine-jones carded a 68 as the Aussies topped their domination of the event with an eye-popping 80-under total.

The Hosts grabbed second place with an 842 after a 200, while South Korea shot to third with a 212 for an 826 in this event also known as the Asia-Pacific golf team championship.

Thailand, hampered by 16-year-old Anajit Hiranmaskorn and Chanavit Phadungsil, took sole fourth at 853 after a 215 as it showed its readiness to spoil the Philippines' 10th bid to the SEA Games slated Nov. 27-Dec. 5 in Manila.

Monalawi and Pagunsan both needed to make the par-5 17th on separate flights to keep the Philippines ahead of Malaysia, who a shot in the evening foursomes Asian Games, which rolled with a five-under final round of 211.

The 39th golfers, third in the first two rounds, were actually fighting for fourth place as they only trailed Thailand by two strokes at the start of the day.

But Monalawi, Pagunsan, Sayoni and Lowie Makam failed to come up with a solid start and struggled all day.

Makam didn't score for the third straight day with a 77.

The Philippines entered shooting solo fifth in Seniors, Pagunsan and Monalawi all flubbed par-high birdie putts on the 18th.

Actually, Monalawi, who started with a 67 and 69, and Pagunsan, who started with a 67 Thursday, had to fight both front two-over nerfs to save the team from being relegated to sixth place.

Lopez, summed here by team captain Sen. Roberto Sabalones, said a minor change in the composition of the team of team will be made after the SF three-team meet week in Bacolod.

The top three spots, he added, are already a cinch for Pagunsan, Monalawi and Dayoso.

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Quisco

Bush rejects quick US pullout from Iraq

SENTENCED HOT LIZ. Army Pfc. Lynndie England after proceedings in her court-martial for abuse of Iraqi detainees, Sept. 22. AP

WASHINGTON—PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH on Thursday rejected a growing chorus of calls for a swift US withdrawal from Iraq as he warned of escalating violence there ahead of an October constitutional referendum.

"Some Americans want us to withdraw our troops so that we can escape the violence," he said in remarks after getting a briefing at the Pentagon. "I recognize their good intentions, but their position is wrong."

Bush's comments came as he faced mounting public dissent, a collapse in popular support for the war and his handling of it, and an antiwar protester planted a major demonstration in Washington.

"Withdrawing our troops would make the world more dangerous and make America less safe. To leave Iraq now would be to repeat the costly mistakes of the past that led to the attacks of September the 11th, 2001," he said.

Bush said terrorists had drawn strength from what he called weak US responses to the 1979 hostage crisis in Iran, the Beirut Marine barracks bombing, the 1993 World Trade Center blast, the killing of US soldiers in Somalia, the attacks on two US embassies in Africa as well as the USS Cole.

"The terrorists concluded: Give us locked the courage and resources to defend ourselves, and as they attacked us. Now the terrorists are testing our will and resolve in Iraq," said the president. "Our withdrawal from Iraq would allow the terrorists to claim a historic victory over the United States."

Bush said Washington had increased its troop strength in Iraq ahead of an October referendum on the war-torn country's draft constitution and warned that extremists would escalate their attacks ahead of their political milestone.

"As Iraqis prepare to vote on their constitution in October and elect a permanent government in December, we must be prepared for more violence," he continued, adding that extremists sought "to set off a civil war."

Some 1,900 US troops have died in Iraq since the March 2003 invasion to oust Saddam Hussein, while recent polls show mounting support for quickly bringing home the roughly 140,000 US forces deployed there.

Bush also sharply criticized Syria, saying Damascus was doing too little to keep extremists from crossing the border into Iraq—a constant complaint from Washington ever since the war began.

"In order to secure a border, it requires cooperation on both sides of the border, and we're getting limited cooperation from Syria," he said. "Their response hasn't been very satisfactory to date."

Bush also dredged off a question about how he could conduct programs in the war on terrorism when Osama bin Laden, the chief backer of the Sept. 11 attacks, remained at large four years after he vowed to bring him to justice. AFP

Scientist says extreme storms due to warming

LONDON—A LEADING BRITISH scientist said on Friday the growing ferocity of hurricanes hitting the United States was very probably caused by global warming and criticized what he termed US climate inaction over the issue.

Sir John Lawton, chair of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution which advises the government, made what the independent newspaper said was a visibly disguised attack on the stance of US President George W. Bush's administration.

"The increased intensity of these kinds of extreme events is very likely to be due to global warming," Lawton told the newspaper in an interview.

"If this makes the climate heroines in the States realize we've got a problem, some good will come out of a truly awful situation," said Lawton.

Less than a month after Hurricane Katrina devastated huge areas of the US Gulf coast, a new hurricane called Rita was roaring through the Gulf of Mexico toward the center of the US oil industry.

Climate change policies sharply divide Bush from many other world leaders who have signed up for caps on emissions of greenhouse gases under the UN's Kyoto protocol. Bush pulled out of Kyoto in 2001, saying it was too expensive and wrongly excluded developing nations from a first round of cuts to 2012.

In July this year, Bush launched a six-nation plan to combat climate change with Australia, China, India, Japan and South Korea focused on a shift to cleaner energy technologies. Unlike Kyoto, it stops short of setting caps on emissions.

Asked what conclusion the Bush administration should draw from rare powerful hurricanes hitting the United States in quick succession, Lawton said, "If what looks like is going to be a horrific year comes the extreme debates about climate change in the US or outside their opinion, that would be an extremely valuable outcome. Reuters

SHOCK! Said Barnes arrives from the broken nose gear of a JetBlue Airbus A320 as it rolls out on its emergency landing at Los Angeles International Airport Sept. 21. AP

LA emergency landing seventh involving sideways nose gear

WASHINGTON—THERE HAVE BEEN AT least seven cases in which the front wheels on Airbus A320s became stuck in a sideways position, forcing pilots to make emergency landings.

No one was hurt in any of the landings, the latest of which occurred Wednesday night in front of a national television audience when a JetBlue plane crashed down in Los Angeles amid smoke and sparks as the front tires disintegrated.

The incidents, unnerving to be sure, are nonetheless considered anomalies and have not prompted federal authorities to take action beyond ordering airlines to follow instructions for replacing rubber seals on the gear.

With about 2,300 Airbus A320s in operation worldwide, the number of incidents involving jammed nose gear is not significant, US Federal Aviation Administration spokesperson Greg Martin said Thursday. Airbus is produced by the European manufacturer EADS.

"It's a safe aircraft," he said.

Wednesday's emergency started soon after takeoff from Burbank, California, near Los Angeles, when the JetBlue A320 pilot received a caution light indicating a problem with the landing gear. He circled past the Long Beach Airport's control tower, where flight controllers saw that the outer wheel hadn't retracted and was twisted out of alignment.

The plane flew in circles for three hours to burn off fuel, then landed safely at Los Angeles International Airport, balancing on its back wheels as it rolled down the runway of the runway.

The National Transportation Safety Board sent a team of investigators to determine what happened.

"Last night's incident conducted exactly as Airbus expected it would," Airbus spokesperson Mary Anne Greczyn said. "Flight crews are trained to handle such situations, and aircraft are designed to withstand such landings."

The A320 family—which includes the A318, A319 and A321—has a somewhat unusual landing gear that rotates before retracting into the fuselage.

"It's definitely not the most common way," said Chuck Eastlake, aerospace engineering professor at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, Florida. "The reason is that the ability of the nose wheel to rotate 90 degrees introduces the possibility of failure, exactly like what we saw."

In contrast, Boeing aircraft landing gear moves straight up and down. AP

Vatican to bar gays, and even those with gay thoughts, from priesthood

VATICAN CITY—THE ROMAN CATHOLIC Church is about to ban men over-impressed of latent homosexual tendencies from training as priests, sources close to the Vatican told AFP Thursday.

The sources said the Vatican will recommend establishing all the measures of modern psychology to weed out even those with homosexual thoughts.

Openly homosexual men already are banned from the priesthood, although that has not prevented gay scandals in several seminaries and an epidemic of priestly pedophilia.

Several specialized publications recently have alluded to a new document on priestly training intended for bishops and directors of seminaries, the Catholic training institutes.

A Vatican official said, however, there have been no plans to publish the document immediately.

But the measure has been under preparation for the past three years by the Vatican congregation for Catholic education, which is in charge of seminary training.

The congregation's August drawing up the document after the issue of priestly pedophilia scandals in the United States.

The text reflects the new among some Catholics...but disputed by others...that the presence of gay clergy in the Church's ranks was to blame for the string of child abuse scandals.

Traumatized by unrelenting attacks by the media and victims, US Catholic bishops in 2000 issued new rules in Dallas, which among other things told bishops to "employ adequate screening and evaluative techniques in deciding the fitness of candidates for ordination."

In 2002, Cardinal Darío Castrillón Hoyos, then secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, declared that "people having a homosexual inclination should not be admitted into seminaries." The congregation was headed by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI.

About the same time, the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship published a seven-page document that "a homosexual person, or one having a homosexual inclination should not be admitted into seminaries." The congregation was headed by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI.

About the same time, the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship published a seven-page document that "a homosexual person, or one having a homosexual inclination should not be admitted into seminaries." The congregation was headed by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI.

Cardinal Walter Kasper, president of the Pontifical council for the promotion of Christian unity, said on that occasion that it was no longer possible "to affirm that the moral principles that guide human sexuality were largely shared by Catholics and Anglicans." AFP

WHO urges calm over Indonesia bird flu outbreak

JAKARTA—THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO) on Thursday urged calm as Indonesia confirmed a new human case of avian influenza.

WHO health experts said the growing number of people with possible symptoms did not mean the outbreak was worsening.

They also said there was still no sign the virus could be passed easily among people.

Avian flu spread in populous Indonesia, where bird flu has killed four people and infected 11 under observation in the capital.

Two others, both children, have also died from the government is consulting results to confirm if the H5N1 virus killed them.

WHO said the Indonesian Health Ministry confirmed on Thursday a further human case of highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza. Tests on patients also other cases were continuing, it added.

"The case, an ex-9-year-old boy, was confirmed as positive for H5N1 infection by a WHO reference laboratory in Hong Kong," the Geneva-based agency said in a statement. He remained in hospital in Jakarta, it added.

Dicky Moeloek, the WHO's Indonesia representative, said that despite the new cases, there is no evidence the H5N1 strain has mutated into a form that could trigger a pandemic.

Dr. Margaret Chan, the WHO's global special representative on avian flu, also said on Thursday there were no signs the virus had mutated into a form that could easily spread among people.

"So far there is no evidence for increased chance of human-to-human transmission," Chan told Reuters by telephone from Sydney after attending a WHO conference in Pyongyang, capital of New Caledonia in the South Pacific.

But Peterson said very close contact with a sick person might infect that caretaker.

"That is why in hospitals we need to take all precautions ... That would be as a way a human-to-human transmission, but that do sounds done close-contact," he said.

Peterson said the case of a father and his two daughters who died in the Tangerang suburb of Jakarta in July might have involved "sufficient family transmission."

Thailand had reported a probable case of human-to-human transmission September 2004, when a 26-year-old woman died of bird flu after "prolonged face-to-face exposure" with her daughter, who was hospitalized with the virus.

All the confirmed and suspected cases have come from, or near, the capital Jakarta.

Chan said the rise in the number of suspected cases did not point to an epidemic.

"With increased surveillance it's not unusual that you would pick up more cases," Chan said.

Bird flu has killed 64 people in Asia since 2003 and has since been found in birds in Russia and Europe.

Peterson said laboratory tests on people killed by bird flu in Indonesia showed they had the same or a similar virus that has killed millions of poultry in Asia.

"The story from the 37-year-old woman ... is far that looks like the bird virus. So there is no reason to believe there has been any mutation to flu," Peterson said of the fourth confirmed bird flu death in the country. Reuters

MARKETS for sale are displayed on a bird market in Jakarta, Sept. 23. AP

CALIFORNIA Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger AP

Beatty says Schwarzenegger Bush's stooge

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA—ROLLING movie star and liberal icon Warren Beatty lambasted Republican Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger at a California state money convention last Thursday but insisted he didn't want to challenge him in next year's election.

"I have a day job," Beatty told the more than 800 guests at a dinner in Oakland, across the bay from San Francisco. "I see many movies when I want to."

The event comes ahead of a special Nov. 8 referendum on several unpopular measures that Schwarzenegger supports, including have teachers rated by performance instead of tenure, and tapping politicians to balance the state budget without raising taxes.

Police, firefighters, nurses and teachers stand to be affected by the proposals.

Schwarzenegger, 57, announced on Sept. 16 that he will seek a second term as California governor when elections are held next year.

Beatty, 66, the star of "Bonnie and Clyde" and "Reds," accused "Free Lies" star Schwarzenegger of arranging the November special election as a way to go on a fund-raising binge for reelection campaign cash.

He argued the measures are in for passive" during the campaign to use the public with slogans by hundreds right-wing interests campaign."

Surveys around planned, burning the words "Stop Arnold" and chanted "Rats, Pirates, Hate" as Beatty alternately skewered Schwarzenegger and the Republican administration of President George W. Bush.

"You and your friends representing have stood up for the arrogance of power and money and bullying and installing disrespect of public servants and representative government and given the administration the insurance cronies it deserves," Beatty said.

Beatty applauded the governor "for not criticizing Bush's "mistaken gambles of invading Iraq, not plotting levees in Louisiana, and ignoring warnings that could have prevented the Sept. 11, 2001 terror attacks.

Schwarzenegger was governing by "shotgun, crockettes, photo ops, fake events, fake issues and backdrops," Beatty charged.

"Being here allows me to make the case that just 30 aging, narcissistic movie actors whose children could be mistaken for their grandchildren necessarily are with the same motivations," Beatty said.

"We are going to terminate the Terminator," movie critic Joanna said, "Arnold is going down."

Beatty's actress wife, annette Bening, and actress-actor Sean Penn were in the event along with the state's most powerful Democrat, John Burton, and Oakland Mayor Jerry Brown, a former California governor.

Schwarzenegger won a special election for governor in October 2003 after his predecessor was voted out of office in a recall referendum. AFP

ISSN 0116-2442 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER Vol. 19 No. 289

OPINION

Publisher [illegible]
Editor-in-Chief [illegible]
Managing Editor [illegible]
Associate Editors [illegible]
Associate Editor for Readership [illegible]
News Editor [illegible]
Opinion Editor [illegible]
Assistant Editor [illegible]
City Editor [illegible]
Senior Desk Editor [illegible]
Editorial Consultant [illegible]
Chief Photographer [illegible]
Art & Design Director [illegible]

Board Chairman [illegible]
President [illegible]
Executive Vice President [illegible]
Senior Vice President for Sales and Marketing [illegible]
Office Administrator [illegible]
Circulation Manager [illegible]

All rights reserved. Except as provided by law, no part of the Philippine Daily Inquirer may be reproduced or transmitted in any manner, electronic or mechanical, or stored in a retrieval system, without prior written permission.

Poor health

THE EXODUS OF DOCTORS AND NURSES TO high-paying jobs abroad has recently been described as a "national hemorrhage," a rather shrill cry, if only because the phenomenon is nothing new. If one considers that the Philippines has been exporting doctors and nurses abroad since the 1960s, then doomsday scenarios of the country's hospitals and clinics being packed with patients but emptied of doctors and nurses in the near future are just that—doomsday scenarios created by prophets of doom. There's really no need to sound the alarm since because the alarm has been ringing all along.

EDITORIAL

Of course, a notable difference has occurred. More and more doctors are switching to nursing to land jobs abroad, especially in the United States where there is a dearth of nurses and care-givers in hospitals and nursing homes. Since doctors have undergone superior training, they seem to have a lock on the nursing positions while nursing graduates have to settle for care-giving slots and have to put in some more training and experience before they can become full-fledged nurses in the United States, with the requisite high pay and high regard. In fact, according to our study, 80 percent of government doctors are now enrolled in nursing schools nationwide hoping to land higher-paying jobs abroad.

Still some responses to the looming crisis have bordered on the alarmist. For example, the Alliance of Health Workers has called on the government to rescind the Philippine commitments to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade purportedly because the trade accord allows countries like the United States and the United Kingdom to lure Filipino local doctors and nurses to work abroad. The suggestion is obviously meant to strike a blow at the Uruguay Round, which is perceived as a capitalist ploy to promote the liberalization of trade in goods and services to the aggrandizement of industrialized countries and at the expense of developing nations.

The exodus ought to be viewed with guarded optimism. While opportunities for gainful employment and professional advancement here remain scarce, the demand for health workers abroad can be considered as an opportunity for such professionals to earn a good, honest living for themselves and their families. At the same time, the situation could be viewed as another compelling reason to reform our health care system so that our country can retain the necessary number of health professionals and scientists by offering just compensation for their long years of studies and their labor.

The strong demand for health-care givers abroad is a mixed blessing for us. It gives an added push to a perceptible shift in our labor export from unskilled or semi-skilled workers to professional and highly skilled workers. But at some point, this shift from brawn drain to brain drain could cost the nation and our people dearly.

Our doctors and nurses have long enjoyed a reputation of warm, and expert care around the world. The increased demand for them merely reaffirms the global renown and respect they enjoy. And their growing number abroad means increased dollar remittances to the national economy.

This increased demand for our doctors and nurses seems likely to be sustained for decades, as Western countries, such as Japan, face the prospect of a demographic winter on account of an aging population. Faced with this reality, the Philippines should make sure that the needs of its own health systems are not compromised. Our policymakers should start looking for ways to keep our hospitals and clinics fully staffed and running. For a start, they might consider requiring graduates of state medical and nursing schools to render service in government hospitals and clinics for a number of years. The health care system should be overhauled so that people will have greater access to medical care and private hospitals and clinics don't come to resemble private patient farms for their services. The reform of the system should also ensure better compensation for medical and health workers. In the long run, an improvement in the quality of our health services and facilities could support a campaign to promote "medical tourism," where foreign patients seek treatment in local hospitals.

In the meantime, the government should ensure quality education by clamping down on substandard schools offering medicine, nursing and related courses. Quality education will ensure a steady supply of capable doctors, nurses and other health workers here and abroad while enhancing the reputation of the Philippines as a global center of health education and a regional center of medical treatment and health care.

The society pages

SEPARATE OPINION

Margaret A. Cruz

THE SOCIETY PAGES ARE FOR THE reading and seeing pleasure of the rich, the not-so-rich, and especially the poor. The fine newspeople express their opinions and observations published for the edification of their easily impressed fans. Some even pay for the publicity. The poor also read about the toothy pleasures of the privileged society and also enjoy derisive hoots at their frivolity.

The society pages are where you can see colored pictures of million-peso weddings with the bride and groom attended by their equally richly-attired ensemble. The bride, who is ever increasingly beautified every wedding she's had (same-up, will be wearing a lovely gown designed by a pansy couturier; the groom will be spiffed if not handsome or a paranoid lack of also squandered wealth. They will have eaten six or a dozen mels of lechon and a bucket of duck (the higher levels of government or business. The rest of the elite flattened thumbprints could lend a soaring homepage.

Even the couples celebrating their golden wedding anniversaries engage in similar hoopla-ballet and spread even more their dear ones where they first exchanged meetings vows. They are more prosperous now and have more fortune to display. The kids wears an elegant dress, pure white as when she was an innocent virgin, and her exhausted partner has lost half more hair since pinched. The grandchildren are either ring bearers or junior bridesmaids, and all must join the family picture so he published in the society pages.

The phrase "society pages" is a generic term to describe the executive mezzanine in the newspapers, especially on week-ends, announcing the flamboyant lifestyles of the rich and famous; also include the not so rich but as we want to be famous. The latter will be photographed in exquisite dresses and the genuine hairs in the style (wrongs for the schmiles (sic) of dark jaded denizens. Coming one page ago, all pages, society pages have passed, replaced with foreign events, but the "Topsiders" will steadfastly be there aged and are also faithfully published for the society editors. The purpose may be to show that the elites are also concerned in other possible attempts.

Many foreign newspapers do not have society pages, neither our local dailies, whose duty are needed to make the ordinary reader's day (he knows and, also) mean know who is engaged to whom, who were wed yesterday, that Madam It's marriage has been successfully annulled or couldn't her to marry Mr. X who has been divorced for years Mrs. X. The Mandaluyong Club will hold its anniversary dinner on Sunday at the Megapena Hotel with Senator Sepia-Ili as guest of honor. All these happenings at separated in the society pages are part of the culture of our people.

Much of the things you can read in the society pages are frivolous and mostly deceptive, but its regulators has exempted to prohibit them as characters of the nation's serious efforts to solve our many difficult problems. The society pages, as it stand as they may be, and even harmful, are protected by Republic Act 8484 which covers not only the thought that agrees with us but also, several, big as Justice Sabbino, the thought that we abhor. The lawmen line is that we're stuck with the society pages, have become woefully used to them, and the chaneuse even love them. Cheel

Moving on

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

Paralyzing it is not the solution.

What made her finally stop sitting on the fence? I think it what she said, to the host of the television:

"The straight in this humongous traffic jam at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. In the Makati business district, unable to move one way or another. And I see a sign, saying 'GLORIA MUST GO'—and it's as if everything smeared up in my face. That's people who can't see even if they bring down their economy or their.

This way am I going to join that group. I have a share running in your words, who is deciding on whether to transfer her business to the Philippines or stay where he is. I am trying my conscience to convince him to stay here, and how am I going to explain this situation, or worse, deliberate attempt to get used in the years of economic life?

"It dawned on me that it is not Gloria who is causing harm to the economy. It is those people, who don't care that they are disrupting business activities, they are making it difficult for people to make a living, they are reducing productivity—all because they are obsessed with bringing down one person.

"I'm not a Gloria lover, but after a lot of soul-searching, she deserved to vote for her in the presidential elections last year, just as after a lot of soul-searching, I decided not to vote for the presidential candidate whom I supported in previous elections, particularly because that was the first time we had disagreed on a political matter. In the end, we agreed to disagree.

She was stressed when the rape scandal broke out. Our lawyers allowed her to be left here while was happening, not to mention the many long-distance conversations she had with various friends and colleagues (courtesy of Skype)—no abatement of her concern.

For three months, more after she resigned, she continued weighing the issues. She wanted to be sure so all sides (including mine), the she would not make up her mind. I respected her indecision. I knew where she was coming from: she had no personal axe to grind, she was thinking of what would be best for the country and, of course, the whole thing was so depressing.

So she called to tell me what her decision was. Let's continue to find out the truth but, in the meantime, let's move the country forward.

I thought it was a brave decision.

What made her finally stop sitting on the fence? I think it what she said, to the host of the television:

"The straight in this humongous traffic jam at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. In the Makati business district, unable to move one way or another. And I see a sign, saying 'GLORIA MUST GO'—and it's as if everything smeared up in my face. That's people who can't see even if they bring down their economy or their.

This way am I going to join that group. I have a share running in your words, who is deciding on whether to transfer her business to the Philippines or stay where he is. I am trying my conscience to convince him to stay here, and how am I going to explain this situation, or worse, deliberate attempt to get used in the years of economic life?

"It dawned on me that it is not Gloria who is causing harm to the economy. It is those people, who don't care that they are disrupting business activities, they are making it difficult for people to make a living, they are reducing productivity—all because they are obsessed with bringing down one person.

"I'm not a Gloria lover, but after a lot of soul-searching, she deserved to vote for her in the presidential elections last year, just as after a lot of soul-searching, I decided not to vote for the presidential candidate whom I supported in previous elections, particularly because that was the first time we had disagreed on a political matter. In the end, we agreed to disagree.

She was stressed when the rape scandal broke out. Our lawyers allowed her to be left here while was happening, not to mention the many long-distance conversations she had with various friends and colleagues (courtesy of Skype)—no abatement of her concern.

For three months, more after she resigned, she continued weighing the issues. She wanted to be sure so all sides (including mine), the she would not make up her mind. I respected her indecision. I knew where she was coming from: she had no personal axe to grind, she was thinking of what would be best for the country and, of course, the whole thing was so depressing.

So she called to tell me what her decision was. Let's continue to find out the truth but, in the meantime, let's move the country forward.

I thought it was a brave decision.

higher or her mission, if they get enough solid evidence against me, as for it—the should go. But they haven't so far. I am not going to stay marching to the rescue. So they should work harder, instead of believing like kids leaving someone because they couldn't get their way.

"Please to the opposition have a great role to play. They keep the administration on its toes. They facilitate Wonderful. They should do that. It is great for the nation, it is great for democracy. But it is one thing to be a watchdog to keep the house safe, and another thing to destroy the house in the process. Which is what they are doing. They're destroying the baby out with the bath water. Enough!"

But my friend B also has some very constructive suggestions for the real Gloria group, as well as everyone who agrees with the feelings of many people who left the EDSA shrine. Some found its hard to work with moving the country forward.

"We are interested in rebuilding the country's growing old of gods and newspapers, and making sure the law is obeyed? So why don't we name names and shame them? Why don't we, in our home, for example, have an extended out-door meeting helpers with the BIR, and do we pay their dues? In our communities, are we active in our barangays and in our civic organizations?

"Search fraud was with the Department of Education. Why doesn't he spend his time monitoring what they are doing, and making sure his executive is law allowing the department to step back into a system of corruption? Like's Chavit's cooperation to with the BIR. Why doesn't she do the same thing in that sector? There they will be truly serving the country.

"And when we look in ourselves, can we please stop the bad habit of assuming that if we break the law, it is all right, but if others break the law they must be punished? We must impose ourselves before we can be effective in improving our society and our country."

So, girl.

Just do it

Political Tidbits

Belinda Olivares-Cannon

* * *

House Majority Leader Rodjiver Seguidor has sought to explain National Security Adviser Ishmael Ermudar's privately funded overseas stint a Baltimore-based lobby group for saying that the firm could assess foreign investors the Charter change most affect business interests. I can see some merit in that argument, but it's still difficult to see why millions of pesos should be wasted on a lobby group operating abroad. It's the Filipino people who have to be convinced about the merits of a shift to the parliamentary federal system of government. Such funds, if indeed they are available, should be spent in our own country. Misunderstandings among our people for their ignorance of the proposed system constitutes the biggest obstacle to the much-needed shift.

* * *

Committee Sec. Rep. Rolando Andaya, chair of the House appropriations committee, did a big public service by revealing the failure of civil society groups to account for P4.9 billion in government assistance channeled to them last year. What's disturbing is that she is becoming a bad habit with some NGOs and people's organizations. In 2003, they also failed to liquidate some P3 billion in grants and assistance.

Andaya's predecessor Rose Nieto Carlos and PDs have been very quick to accuse government of lack of transparency in spending, but "it seems they are not practicing what they preach." He noted that some NGOs that are run by the PDs might operations, although "some of them may just have been overwhelmed by paper work" or that they failed to account for the funds. Without proper accounting, he said, any expense of public funds is "irregular."

* * *

Sen. Ana Baquiran salamanca Victor Ignacio had pointed out that the Bandalanan state re-signed Cabinet members Dinky Soliman and Teresita Quintos Deles either breached some in-action or just because of power in the executive department that they still have to abide by accounting. One thing I believe is: Then some various Supreme and freely-delivered billions to government-funded or NGOs and PDs and didn't press for an accounting? The report cannot, for instance, find the Department of Energy, Mindanao and Development, which billions head, of the four years, had released P900 million to NGOs that remained unaccounted for as of Dec. 31, 2004. Also unaccounted for were corruption in government in the early boom accounting process in some agencies.

* * *

The cabinet has sought to give the impression that the failure of the impeachment move in the House Atienza drive with the vote-trust but in the Commission, the inclusion of as many reasons one issues in the amended complaint, the failure of some opposition members, the failure to convince the public that the issues involved are of serious evidentiary or election fraud, and the lack of credibility of some opposition leaders. Another reason was that the majority of congressmen have more than one term in office and no longer problem, since the people pushing for her impeachment had different agendas. That was evident from their varied proposals regarding who would take over, such as a transitional council, a revolutionary council, a military junta, etc. Moreover, it was clear that those who wanted to take over either have lost in the elections or can soon be elected over to running against.

Also, many other issues raised in their love is good for their President Senate Committee. Eventually the opposition realized its mistake and some of them, like former President Cory Aquino, said they would consider the Erap Presidency as the constitutional successor. But by then, it was too late. The members of the majority bloc had made up their minds to stick with GMA. As Rondolon Sen. Eduardo Ermudar put it, "GMA represents stability."

Thanks, MiG

At Large

Rina Jimenez-David

seeing for him. Since guys don't always finish last, MiG, for thanks for always giving your audience a good show, and giving us one more reason to root for a Pinoy!

* * *

CHEATING hurt, and we always the positive kind, to the near reality show "Pinoy Big Brother." Ideally, after the nine main housemates have left, I cannot in anybody out of curiosity but was your bored out of the study.

Watching, however, told me that in the months since the show's launch, many people have begun following the show, mainly in anticipation of any short "juicy" revelations from the residents, who've taken to discussing—hilariously that there's being watched by the host of the evening—such matters as who's been seen with whom and for how long, who's been caught in the act, and whether they enjoyed prolonged "making out," as it is frankly, before they go down and dirty.

Only a couple of days ago, I was momentarily entangled in the course of the show, which is pretty obvious since they're constantly encouraged to each other's duties, etc. on gossip post, and encouraged the camera to a well, conspiratorial pose/hearing.

The BBPOP has recently entered the picture, imposing a one-day ban on mouth-of a panelist, stating that "PBB" is a family show, and parents for the show's 8-hour timeslot. I'm usually averse to censorship, but in this instance, I must agree with the board. So pervasive is TV's presence in our home, and so accessible to our children, that producers should be extra cautious about the contents of anything they show.

My curiosity piqued most, I decided to tune into "PBB" a few nights ago and was struck by the sheer banality of life in that house. The girls, for instance, seemed to do nothing but stand in front of a mirror and brush or iron their hair. We saw everyone at once, and we should worry about with "PBB," it seems, but boredom, showing us how extreme our lives really are.

* * *

GOLDEN really "get" my neighbor's obsession with "Buffy the Vampire Slayer," until, surfing the channels, I caught one of the "Buffy" episodes on an endless loop on Star TV, and was enthralled. It was a "musical," with original songs by none other than "Buffy" herself, and the dialogue was so clever, the voices memorable, that the lyrics never take quite clever and were catching. And the send-ups of various musical genres were complete amusing.

Well, anyway, I'm not a fan of musicals, nevertheless. Early this week, mainly on our "slayer's" urging, my commercial all the way to Carmelweb 2 for a casual preview of "Serenity," a sci-fi adventure film based on another Joss Whedon-created series by Whedon called "Firefly."

Joss is the fan favorite, "Serenity" tells the tale of the intergalactic freelance crew of a flighter ship of the future name, and their adventures on the frontier, which has managed to bind an entire galaxy by reigning me the "humanity" of the inhabitants. Viewers and directed by Whedon, "Serenity" is best pursued and followed through special effects on some true typical "Star Wars" fan fare pumped up.

But it's the clever script that's the real star, and the audience at the media preview, most of them "Slayer" or "Firefly" fans, were in stitches at the quick-witted repartee and sharp observations. And I must admit, "Serenity" is no pale quasi-clone and imitation, breaking new ground in movie dialogue.

"Serenity" has been scheduled for showing here only next year, although it will open in the near week or so in the United States and elsewhere. If there's enough "buzz" about it here, distributors might be encouraged to open it earlier. I'd consider this a plug for a movie that's not only worth your while, but gives a creative genius the platform he deserves.

Talents

TALENT IS DEFINED BY THE WEBSTER DICTIONARY AS the natural endowments of a person. It is the innate ability to do something well.

When I was a kid, there were three subjects that I wanted most—color good marks, volunteer against singing voice and to be able to draw well.

Little by little, I crossed off three. Others have two, and some have nine. However, there are still others who have not even one of these talents, and their number is children too.

I grew up thinking that those who were naturally talented and unstoppable as I thought that being a math wizard would give me an edge in everything I set out to do. I tried to love math with all my heart and mind. I practiced for long hours especially before my exams.

Young Blood

Caroline Christine Ofo Tongco

At first, I thought I was doing great... but as I advanced in the years level in school, fundamental problems became real problems for me, causing me so many frustrations. I started getting mediocre grades in the subject, and it wasn't long before I understood that one everything could be achieved through hard work. Math was not for me, so math and totally blessed with a special gift. Despite all my efforts, math couldn't love me back. I was heartbroken.

I grew up watching the book talks, which was obviously intended to promote entertainment. I would watch people singing on various shows and that gave me the impression that if only I could sing, then I would be the happiest girl alive. So every night, I would sing to the bathroom or under my sing in the bathroom, hoping against hope that I would develop that golden voice just waiting to be discovered by talent scouts.

Years later I realized that exercise, my brothers and parents began telling me that I was off-key. I was in junior high and my mom told me that I did not sing before I accepted that singing and I were not really meant for each other.

I grew up reading story books with stunning illustrations and I wished I could also draw my own masterpieces and publish them for the whole world to admire. Alas, I still don't. I still know wanted to draw like my favorite characters. After all, math quit love, singing certainly said drawing called would weren't being held for me either, so all.

I used to dream all about how I was unpopular. So, I still haven't figured out what my talents really is. In fact, I'm not convinced if I have one. But I know it would be foolish to reduce a person's potential worth to a mathematical equation. It is unreal, and it is judge the merit of someone by his voice quality and it is wrong. I am not the best in all subjects but I'm not useless and I'm far from useless in other fields. I think I will be happy and success in years to the world that I am created and crowned greater heights without being a master of numbers, without having a lovely voice and without being able to draw an apple that doesn't look like an orange.

Caroline Christine Ofo Tongco, 16, is a third year IB Liqui Mendoza student in the Ateneo de Manila University.

Thinking ahead

Aimee Louise Sison

SINCE I WAS STUCKING AT THE INTERNATIONAL School, it was always assumed that I would eventually leave the Philippines to pursue my college education abroad.

When I was younger, I looked on that premise with optimism and excitement. I thought that I would be able to realize serious studying and dedication to earn my place in an American university from then on, I was more than good with determination. But now, on the eve of my departure, I see the journey ahead with a mixture of excitement, apprehension and even fear.

I have lived my whole thought of myself as a brave person. However, as I ponder my future outside the Philippines, I find my fears steadily growing. I fear the unknown. How will I survive in a place where I know no one? More importantly, how will I survive away from the comforts of home?

Because of my own fears, I have stopped thinking about leaving, blogging the many steps ahead. I've decided to think about the present.

My friends assume that once I leave, I will not return. A few words ago, when I told an acquaintance that I was off to the United States for college, he said, "Too bad. The country keeps losing its best and brightest." To him, it was as though I was not only bringing a Filipino education, but abandoning the Philippine country.

This, however, is far from from the truth. No, I am off to the States. Yes, I will be there for all four years of my college education. But I do not intend to relocate there. I intend to return to home.

This is my home. The large and crowded city with its large and crowded malls. The imperfectly paved roads complete with the frustrating traffic jams and the outrageous weather. The great MMDA fiasco and the standing water only MRT stopping by the corner. The people who are always begrudgingly polite and accompanying any matter to the palengke where the produce is always fresh.

Male Americans may show me smoother roads and have wider selections in their groceries, they will never overpower what I love about the Philippines. I love that I can live in a house outside. The United States may be the most powerful country in the world, but it is not mine.

I worry about the country I am leaving behind. The exchange rate for those borrowing around P56 to $1. Half of the population struggle to survive, and we have the dawn-dog crime of terrorism. Sometimes, I wonder why I am here. I worry more and more about our nation, to the what I'm leaving behind? Is this what I'll be returning to?

Yet, rather than forcing me to make my absence a permanent one, these are the very reasons I have to come back—to the hope that can make a change in this nation. I will be able to do my democratic situation with a fresh vision and possibly come up with fresh solutions to some of these problems.

So as for departure does approaches, I stop thinking of everything Filipino as things I'm leaving behind. I think of them as things I will be returning to. From before those I wouldn't be leaving, I will ordinarily planned my return. So as Socrates said, "There's no place like home."

Aimee Louise Sison, 18, graduated recently from the International School Manila and will be studying mass communications at the University of California, Berkeley.

Catastrophes and Calamities

Sense and Sensibility

Bambi L. Harper

the time, areas that at midnight the former strath, so-cited, hitmen and long-running mobsters were seen. The good thing about the is was the end of the world and Julian Assignees Clay had come.

Chaos was awakened by the ousting of the leaders of the doors and windows. Shots rang out and everyone's thoughts and prayers were answered. The only be a then little chaos. It was only when he left the wrong meaning of the house that he jumped out of bed and took refuge in the apartment of the door. It was chaotic, to say the least, as the smoke of a round as was what it clear and then from the the smoke of many bank and bank without his being able to say anything beyond, "U, Bahrain Bin."

In the city, some buildings were destroyed and a few people were lost but only one died. In the end, the death toll was 1. Imagine that—only one the two dozen of the collateral damage gifts and destroyed a large portion of the Gospel mist and pulverized all the facing of the walls in the main chapel. It became necessary to re-paint and re-tile the floor. The other casualties in the city have been moved cracked but did not collapse even with the extreme wind and rain pouring slightly.

In the aftermath of this disaster, Fr. Juan de Ribera preached that it made sense to choose a saint as public influence for our disciples, and so declare a day each year as a feast day following the example of Sts. Pontevicius, advocate against hurricanes and storms. The saints could intercede for God to spare them such great tribulation and danger.

Others dismissed his idea with the other religious leaders and officials of the Catholic Church of which he was one, with the archbishop, they could decide on a day and place for the celebration of a song Mass, followed by a procession where the image could be borne. The devotees were offered one of their chapels to be used for the music. They would keep the image on an altar and decorate it on the day of the feast so that it could be celebrated with all solemnity. The procession would be held in the streets.

The Catholic and the acting archbishop accepted the proposal. A day was chosen and in the cathedral, D. Gabriel de la Cruz, the second dean of the church, had the honor of taking the first step. Various pieces of paper were placed in a basket were placed. Picked was the name of Saint Pelleritus, Master, Bishop of Tarsinus, whose feast day fell on July 26. A solemn Mass was celebrated by Fr. Gabriel himself using Tarsinusian vestments. The service was held in April 1561, which was about at least the same time that the Apostolic See in Rome placed the illustrious martyr in the heavens.

The trumpets, comforting with the result of the schedule plan, were sounding on the dome for earthquakes and dedicated a chapel to him and installed his statue on a beautiful altar with lots of gold composed by Fr. Angelo Germano sculpting. "After mass, Palladius, other saints dismissed, and the people went to their homes," Fr. Germano, ministry of Fr. Ted Torralba, of the Sanctuary Jesus Child Infant Redeemer, pious new devotees were sent your favor and ask your assistance in keeping the earth safe.)

From that time, the feast day of Saint Pelleritus was celebrated in the cathedral on that day, and on the Jesuit church the following Sunday there was a veneration of his relic that Bishop had sent.

Bambi L. de Pantaleon Cerbo, Saint Evangelical, 1661 Vol. II, edited by P. Pablo Nuestro, 1890

La Mesa safe from Payatas dump

THE BAR REFERENCE TO RIZ Palacio's query regarding the possible contamination of the drinking water of Alvena Manalo residents with leachate from the Payatas dump. [Letters, PDI, 9/16/05] She apparently has concern. Let him be assured that the issue has been addressed by the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) several years ago.

To ascertain that the water served to La Mesa is safe for human consumption, the MWSS monitored several wells relative to the effects of the Payatas dump on the La Mesa Dam and Reservoir, viz:

- "Effects of Payatas Dumpsite Study," conducted by the National Hydraulic Research Center (NHRC) of the University of the Philippines; its findings revealed there is no way the leachate coming from the dump will contaminate the water in the La Mesa Reservoir for the following reasons:

a. The La Mesa Reservoir is located at a higher elevation, 52 M amsl (above mean sea level), Payatas dump is 30 M amsl.

b. The MODflow Model used by the NHRC in the simulations for the groundwater flow revealed that the La Mesa Reservoir recharges to the groundwater flow going to the dump area, which can be traced to the dam's seepage.

- The La Mesa Dam Seepage Study being conducted by the Manila Water Co. Inc. (MWCI), in cooperation with the Philippine Nuclear Research Institute (PNRI). Preliminary findings reveal there is no relationship between the nature of chemicals (water quality) found in the monitoring wells in the Payatas area and the nature of chemicals found in the monitoring wells inside the La Mesa Reservoir. These results lead to the conclusion that there is no contamination of water in the La Mesa Reservoir, which is coming from Payatas.

We would therefore like to assure the concerned public that the possibility of [illegible] contaminating the La Mesa Reservoir is very remote at present, as shown in the various findings of the above-mentioned studies.

—MA[illegible] A. CRUZ,
acting administrator,
Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, Katipunan Road, Balara, Quezon City

Reforms also needed in the Church

THAT IS A REACTION TO A NEWS story headlined "CBCP urges donor to give cash to gov't." [PDI, 9/19/05] It reported that "Davao Archbishop Fernando Capalla has called on the faithful, especially members of the religious community to embark on a collective sacrifice to help alleviate the country's financial crisis." What an irony!

Mina-alok ako dinsaman sang country which demands and thousands of pesos in sumbong from the parishioners are poured in? Is it only true to the handful, if not some, most of the parish priests. They don't even share it with the poor in their area. The archdiocese should be distributed to the different ministries like the ministry on worship, education and social services. But no, they keep it for themselves and indulge in luxury. We should see their books sometime even have more than one personal car.

On top of this, they put most of the stuff below the minimum wage and without any benefits. And we think that they belong to the church and preach social justice. There are scandals involving priests having girlfriends and children but the root cause of these is money. If the priests do not have lots of money, they cannot afford to have secret families.

Since the funds come from parishioners, there ought to be a law mandating the audit of Church funds. However, this is not feasible because of the separation of Church and State. But the government should look into the human rights violations by the Church, particularly in the treatment of its staff.

It is evident that graft and corruption also abounds even in the Church, and it is ironic when I read in the papers articles similar to the one cited above. It is really critical, but I have to step out as my media eats do this. Media can start investigating and questioning priests and office staff in the dioceses; I believe that once this is out in the open, there will be changes in the Church for the better or not.

—LILIAN A. HERNA,
Las Piñas City

LETTERS

Power rate could still be reduced

THE [illegible] RATE REDUCTION in Meralco's September charge is a welcome relief for residential consumers who are suffering from the effects of the skyrocketing oil prices.

But did it have to be the President Unimod of Meralco who had to announce the cut, like she were Meralco's spokesperson? Could the make the announcement just to save the credit for Meralco's decision to buy more power from its IPPs (independent power producers), a move that Meralco claims will result in a reduction in its power rates?

Why this unnecessary cooking of the [illegible] complaints, the doubts behind her actions is suspect. Couldn't her advisers do any better than become the Office of the President?

And then again, this question about the current charges of the Meralco IPPs. Anybody can go to the National Power Corp.'s website which shows that although its generation charge since May 2005 has increased to P4.40 per kWh, the power rate we see in the Meralco bi-monthly bill is P4.50 per kWh. A reduction of P0.22 per kWh, will bring down the average generation charge to P4.70 per kWh. This is still P0.30 per kWh higher than Napocor's current rate.

What else tells us is: if Meralco bars all its power needs from Napocor, consumers will get a reduction of P0.30 per kWh, not just P0.22 per kWh.

—TERESITA ROLARIO
4 (?) Manila St.,
Bonanoy Tejeros, Makati City

The Chinese in the World War II campaign for liberation and freedom

I WAS HAPPY MOVED BY THE article "Bataan massacre trial of aviator finds harbor in SF" by Margaret C. Diaz, (PDI, 8/14/05) to shred, practicality molding is known by the present day generation of Filipinos regarding the contributions of World War II Manila Chinese to the cause of freedom.

Sea young women in late 1944, I witnessed these Chinese guerrillas occupy our village in the heat of Mt. Banjun. Their bizarre and heroic exploits prevailed there as early as the Japanese ran amok in Bataan, Tarlac, Bataan, Zambales, Bataan Roja and the Southern Tagalog provinces. They were highly respected by the civilian population, peasant partisans and USAFFE guerrillas for their bravery, intelligence, iron discipline and powerful firearms.

They were the very first foreign civilians to join the first Filipino peasant partisan groups in Candaba, Pampanga. On March 14, 1942, their encampment was attacked by a combined force of Japanese soldiers and Filipino puppet policemen from San Miguel, Bulacan. The outclass enemy troops emitted too late they had fallen into a trap. After the battle, 48 Japanese soldiers and 68 Tagalog puppet policemen lay dead. One Chinese guerrilla named Li, single-handedly killed six of the enemies.

On March 20, 1942, various guerrilla bands in the Central Plain met in San Isidro, Sta. San Leonardo, Cabiao, Nueva Ecija, and formally organized the very first and largest guerrilla army in the Philippines. Supreme Link M. Tinio wanted to call it the Philippine Army of Liberation but Manila Chinese persuaded the commander to name it the People's Anti-Japanese Army hence Hukbo ng Bayan Laban Sa Hapon (Hukbalahap).

On May 10, 1942, the Overseas Chinese Anti-Japanese Guerrilla Unit of Wah Chi, was officially formed in include all Chinese volunteers from outside Manila. They included intellectuals, literature experts, military tacticians, guerrilla veterans from China, demolition experts, etc. From June 1942, the Wah Chi took a Pampanga Fish organizer and for three months secretly secured the assistance of Bataan and Zambales for discarded and stored firearms, ammunitions and gun parts. These were then transported secretly at the dead of night in a hideout near Pasbat Mountain in western Pampanga, where they were painstakingly cleaned, repaired and reassembled. These were then distributed to new Hak squadrons.

In the latter part of the war, the 96th Chi joined the Huks and US-AFFE guerrillas in fighting the Japanese. They also armed secretly as peace mediators in the Huk and USAFFE camps. They finally united several times in late 1944. In February 1945, Wah Chi units joined the 6th Army and other guerrilla groups in the fighting in Manila. They also participated in the liberation of many of these 2,000 American war prisoners from the Los Baños Prison Camp.

—DANIEL M. SIGON,
War Veterans Club of Angeles, Wah Chi Angeles, Angeles City

The US camouflage for intelligence ops

BASHEL L. SARPEN (SARMIENTO AND JULY 28 column: the "boarding spree" for what we call "spring camp"—a Cabinet-level spy for incumbent [illegible] people"—is one of our revitalized [illegible] Education subjects in AP Bilimon) of two young US naval cadets, Leonard Sargent and Will "Wilson, in the Luzon province in 1898. Bashel stated that "the two young servers found the residents of Manila unpleasant. They warned me to [illegible] the rest of the population." The naval folks were described as "[illegible] and kind [illegible]" who toured the special guests to dinners and dances.

Bashel's report [illegible] the superficial value of Filipino hospitality and concluded that "in many ways we haven't changed at all."

Of course, the story was just part of the account about the young sailors' tour of duty in the Philippines, which were dictated by an undisclosed policy in their case, Wilson and Sargent's [illegible] concealed the real intent of their mission; they were, in fact, on covert intelligence operation which was hatched by Rear Admiral George Dewey and disguised as "ethnographic research" under the auspices of the navy anthropologist Dean Worcester. They were gathering real information "... at a time when the United States had not yet made up its mind whether or not to hold on to the Philippines."

Wilson and Sargent in their valuable "Report of Tour Through the Islands of Luzon, November 23, 1898" (Senate Documents No. 138, 56th Congress, 1st Session, February 23, 1900) took note of Luzon's geography from a tactical angle, noting the best approaches from which to attack cities and fortifications. They also attached a detailed map. Filipino officers under Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo suspected that this was the navy's ultimate goal. In the report's final sentence, "Preparations for War," the two cadets made an estimation of Filipino troops' strength, war materials and defenses.

Maj. Gen. George Wheeler (who knew) in "Fighting Joe" and the "daring" of new commissioners in Cuba and the Philippines of the US Army and the publishers of "The Islands and Their People" (1899) may have agreed that such report "... addresses the hearty appreciation of every intelligent American who would acquaint himself with our islands and their people." Unfortunately, the factual insight and honest words of these intelligence report prepared and confirmed the fears of the Filipinos who returned by the new young intelligence officers—the coming genocidal war of America against the Filipinos, which started on Feb. 4, 1899.

I hope Sarpen will take note in his future columns that the seeming semi-curse of the two American cadets was not a meaningless meandering but a conscious attempt to write Philippine history under the imperialist policy of the United States.

—FLORENTINO G. HOSAD JR.
College of Arts and Letters, UP Diliman, Quezon City

If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Ayala and Makarda Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

Nestlé union leader murdered

CALAMBA CITY—THE LEADER OF STRIKING WORKers of food and beverage giant Nestlé Philippines was gunned down in front of a plastic factory in Barangay Pinagsama Real this city late Thursday afternoon.

The death of Diosdado Fortuna, 58, was quickly condemned by leftist labor groups, with one pinning the blame on his actions as the killing came after the Presidente rallied tough against her political opponents.

"We are certain that the killing is politically motivated. Attempts [were] are bloodied once more ...," said a statement from Elmer Labog, national chair of the Kilusang Mayo Uno.

"We will work justice for his death and will mend the evil perpetrators of this murder to hell where they belong," he said.

Fortuna died of two gunshot wounds in the back as doctors tried to save his life at the Calamba Doctors' Hospital.

Fortuna heads the 600-strong Union of Filipino Employees-Drug and Food Alliance (UFE-DFA), the coalition of employees of the Nestlé factory in Cabuyao, Laguna.

The group has been on strike since Jan. 14, 2002 after talks for a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) with management on retrenchment benefits bogged down.

Pedro Uy-Liacco Jr., director for communications of Nestlé, said in a statement that the Nestlé management was shocked over the killing of Fortuna.

"We condemn this act of violence and extend our sympathies to Pete's family and relatives. We are prepared to extend help to his family and the Calamba police for a swift resolution of its investigation."

"He doesn't deserve to die like this. He did nothing wrong but to fight for what is due the hardworking like him. What an injustice," his wife Lucasia said.

Leo quickly blamed Nestlé management for the killing.

"My husband has no other enemy except Nestlé management."

Supt. Severo de la Cuesta, deputy chief of the Calamba police, said Fortuna was on his way home in his motorcycle from the Nestlé picket line when gunmen shot him twice about 5:30 p.m.

A passing motorist stopped by and brought Fortuna to the hospital where he died.

Police said the gunmen were hitmen and could not be easily identified.

After news of his death spread, hundreds of people swarmed to the Nestlé factory to denounce the killing.

Fortuna's wife said her husband's last text message to her, sent just 30 minutes before he was gunned down, was about their two-year-old grandson, who was suffering from diarrhea.

"He would tell me to remember the diet of his would be amanda. To remember the vehicle his attackers will use," she said. "It hurts me more to know that I wasn't there when he was killed. How can I help bring him justice?"

Fortuna became president of the Nestlé union when its former head, Melton Rosas, was killed in front of the Nestlé plant in 1986.

Abraham Ramos with Reiffle Abrol, Jun Al., INQ Southern Luzon Bureau

FARMERS' FLIGHT

Farmers from Calatagan, Batangas rally near the Supreme Court's denouncing the SC decision favoring Dandong Calatagan's Asiatec Chemicals Industries, a company which plans to build a cement factory in Batangas at the expense of 112 farmer beneficiaries who have occupied the land for 10 years.

ROUNDUP

Tricycle strike

PAGADIAN (STI)—Tricycle drivers here declared a transport holiday on Sept. 23 to demand LTO fare hike, saying they needed the increase due to rising costs of gasoline and other petroleum products. Drivers parked their tricycles, the main mode of transportation around the city, along the terminals, sending most commuters elsewhere to join the strike, which began at 6 a.m. Thursday this week. Jaime Ong, president of the tricycle association, said 100 percent of association members, or around 2,600, joined the strike. Ong said they would continue their protest until the local government unit granted their demand.

Mindanao Cabanglasan, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Reb suspect nabbed

BALANGA CITY—Police arrested on Sept. 11 a suspected member of the communist group Partido ng Manggagawa Rebolusyong Pilipinas who was implicated in the killing of two policemen in Bataan. Provincial police director Senior Supt. Hermogilio Aduca said the suspect, Noel Lagan, 38, alias "Lanta," of Samal town, was arrested after his bus he was riding in was stopped at a checkpoint in Orion-Pilar town. Lanta said Judge Ferrigie Lacsamana of Bataan regional trial court issued a warrant for Lagan' arrest. Lagan was suspected of plotting Chief Insp. Godofredo Salonga in 2000 and SPO3 Renato Valencia in 2002. Police said Lagan also joined communist rebels in raiding police stations and army detachments in Pilar, Morong, Orani and Samal. Greg Macabenlan and Danilo Rivera, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Cable TV provider raided

CAMARINES—Agents of the National Bureau of Investigation raided a cable TV provider here and seized decoders, which they said were illegally acquired. The agents, three of them armed with handguns, barged into the Bicolandia Skycable in Binanuan Pili and ordered company employees not to move while three other agents searched the offices and the studio. After confiscating the decoders, the agents left. NBI regional director Atty. Oscar Sanchez said the Bicolandia Skycable provider established in 2001 and operated with no authority. Charlie Zaldua, PDI Bicolandia Bureau

Isabela bridge opened

ILIGAN (Isabela)—Eighteen years after its construction started, a bridge connecting the towns of Burgos and Quirino was opened to commerce lately. Officials said the 105.84-meter bridge, whose construction started in 1988, was completed only this year due to insufficiency of funds. Burgos Mayor Felicidad Alaban said the bridge and the nearly built Pl.38-million road linking the villages of Cangaluto and San Miguel would help farmers in bringing their produce.

Wilfredo Alejo Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Apology

In the PDI Mindanao Bureau written to apologize for the story "El added to murder" below in Sarangani, "administrative aid" on page A16 of the Sept. 20 issue of the newspaper. The story is not in the literature. The old story was not such a crime when the two died story, which was about the Bayland Media Board is serious on its governance using public resources, was carried and caused using the same title.

GMA to be absent in ARMM execs' inauguration

By Nash Madava
PDI Mindanao Bureau

COTABATO CITY—THE NEW SET of officials of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) will be sworn into office on Sept. 30, minus President Macapagal Arroyo in the list of national officials expected as guests in the inaugural day.

But, according to the Philippine Information Agency (PIA), the President had a tentative schedule here anytime next week, which may be set in time for her first day in office of the newly-elected officials.

The President earlier said she was invited a bunch of public

INQUIRER Visayas

John Jon Bandayrel
Baras Cinel Edralyn L. Benedicto

US pols, vets at odds over Balangiga bells

By Rolando O. Borrinaga
Balangiga, Eastern Samar

WHICH OCCUR FIRST: the return of Balangiga bells or the ritual reconciliation among descendants of the combatants from both sides of the Battle of Balangiga in 1901?

This chicken-or-egg question begs the healing and closure process for the descendants of those involved in the Balangiga Encounter, which 104th anniversary would be commemorated in this historic home town on Sept. 28.

There were high hopes early this year that the two bells of Balangiga at U.S. Warren Air Force Base (AFB) in Wyoming would soon be on their way home to the Philippines. But the Wyoming governor has since snarled these hopes.

Last March 26, the Wyoming Veterans Commission (WVC), by a 7-4 vote in favor, decided to support a resolution to return the two bells in their residency to the Philippines.

The vote was a result of months of behind-the-scene efforts by the Balangiga Research Group (BRG) to influence the decision by presenting the commission with the latest findings from their research that had clarified and resolved the outstanding American and Filipino versions of the Balangiga incident on Sept. 28, 1901.

The BRG is composed of Jean Hall, the daughter of the first American soldier to be stranded in Balangiga; Bob Coombe, a Subic-based British screenwriter and video director; and this writer.

The BRG's research findings have since been acknowledged and used by Eastern Samar Bishop Leonardo Medroso and other US-based supporters in their complementary campaign for the return of the bells to the town's plaza.

Just before the WVC voting, Jean Hall presented her case for the return of the bells, based on two arguments that were not contested by any WVC member: that none of the two bells in Wyoming was used during the attack on Company C, 9th US Infantry Regiment (by Filipino guerilla fighters); the involved bell is in the museum of the 2nd US Infantry Division stationed in Korea; and that there is no connection between Company and Company C, members of the ill-fated company came from Wyoming.

After the vote, the next step would have been for the WVC representatives and Hall to call on Wyoming Gov. David Freudenthal and hand him on the decision, and then they would release a joint press statement on the issue.

But a disgruntled member of the WVC broke agreed rules and persuaded Gov. Freudenthal to oppose the return of the bells. The governor did so with a press release, even before he was formally briefed and given the opportunity to examine the evidences supporting the commission's decision.

PHOTO OF Balangiga Bells Memorial in Wyoming, representing one held with items from Pvt. Adolph Gomila's grave in Nebraska. [illegible]

Damage control

Away from the media, Balangiga Mayor Cecilina Cunanan, through the BRG, sent an e-mail to Gov. Freudenthal expressing her people's "appreciation to the Wyoming Veterans Commission for its decision to recommend the return of the two bells."

The response was made by a political analyst of the Wyoming governor. It stated:

"The governor believes the two Bells of Balangiga ... represent a significant part of Wyoming's military heritage ... and he respectfully believes they should stay where they are now located. Also I don't know if these bells, situated on a federal facility, has been for many years and is at the discretion of the federal government and the ultimate decision to return the Bells of Balangiga or leave them as they are at Ft. Warren AFB is one over which Governor Freudenthal has no authority. A decision to return the bells to the Philippines would come from the United States Congress."

Regarding the inquiries, request around the world that the BRG had compiled went one in saying that based on custom law, military law and international treaties, the contested bells belong to Balangiga.

All US officials directly involved in the Balangiga issue on both sides of the Pacific, including US Army senior leaders and diplomats, have also been out in saying, although quietly, that their government knows that the right, legal and ethical course of action is to return the bells to their rightful place, that is, to Balangiga.

On top of these, the US Congress, through the Unified Code of Military Justice, has provided the US president with the required authority to return the bells regardless of the status of the property rights involved.

The Wyoming front

The Balangiga bells issue exploded into a mud-slinging contest involving the issue of honor, integrity, experience and affiliations of key veteran leaders in Wyoming.

Three WVC members who were known to have voted in favor of returning the bells were not reappointed to the commission last July. They were alleged victims of "bullying" inside the WVC, which was exposed by Percy Burgess, a worker on the commission, in a letter published by the Casper Star Tribune last Aug. 10.

The harassed "bullying" victim so far is Col. Joe Imrek, who raised the approved motion (voted in the two-weighted bells in Wyoming to Balangiga. He is now out of the WVC.

Imrek, as Wyoming department commander of the American Legion, was the "point man" for keeping the bells in US soil during President Fidel Ramos' failed campaign in 1997-98 to have the bells returned to the country in time for the centennial of the Declaration of the Philippine Independence on June 12, 1898.

The time around, backed by recent research findings and new information, Imrek has had a change of heart and now wants the bells returned.

"Returning the bells is the right thing to do in light of the present international climate and the fact that many nations are now returning artifacts or items to the nations from which they came," Imrek said in a letter published by the Casper Star Tribune last April 8.

In 1998, 40 of 60 members of the House of Representatives and 16 of 30 senators in the Wyoming State Legislature signed an informal joint resolution endorsing a plea to replicate the two war trophies on display at the U.S. Warren AFB to look Balangiga and Wyoming could have one authentic and one replica bell each.

But the resolution failed to prosper due to the opposition from the veterans, who felt they were "shut out of the process."

It was the Wyoming veterans' voice that was heard in the US Congress, when Senators Craig Thomas and Michael B. Enzi and Rep. Barbara Cubin filed bills opposing any move to dismantle the bells.

This time, the same Wyoming Congressional delegation and the state governor are exerting pressure on the critical mass of veterans who already favor the return of the bells to shore by their old position to keep the bells in their state.

Reconciliation efforts

Apart from the bells campaign, officials and key residents of Balangiga have spearheaded the process of healing and reconciliation between the descendants of Balangiga and of Company C, 9th US Infantry Regiment.

Joint PMI started the process for the American survivors' descendants in 1998 and 2000. She has since reconciled with the descendants of Captain Adelbert Alexander and Mariano Abalos, two Balangiga fighters who had actually landed on the bell of Pvt. Adolph Gomila, in 1901.

In March 2000, Mayor Cunanan wrote a letter to Col. Daniel F. Bolger, Chief of Staff of the Korea-based 2nd US Infantry Division, the modern soul of the 9th US Infantry Regiment. She invited their town's former enemy unit to conduct a memorial rite in Balangiga on Aug. 10 and 11 of that year. (Aug. 10 is the town fiesta, and Aug. 11 is the date of arrival of Company C in Balangiga in 1901.)

Cunanan has since received a response from Captain Stark, commander of Company C. The captain's letter expressed friendship and did not rule out the "long overdue reconciliation" for the 1901 event.

But though the Balangiga mayor's invitation had been accepted, Company C's reinstrument rule away out for forthcoming years.

Last year, the 9th US Infantry Regiment, including Company C, was flagged down to long to fight a war that has parallels with the bloody Samar battlefield a century ago.

Luisita to fight gov't over stock contract cancellation

From page B1

advanced by the family of former President Corazon Aquino and its tenants in 1989 and distributed the nearly 6,000-hectare hacienda in 10 stock workers.

Asistio spokesperson Pepe Hinchada Jr. said they were surprised on by the DAR to cancel the memorandum of agreement implementing the SDO in Hacienda Luisita because the HLI had complied with all the requirements of the contract.

"There's no reason to revoke it, and it's not for the DAR to do it now. If the DAR is thinking of revoking the SDO agreement, the only fit viewed is violation of Constitution," Mendoza told the Inquirer in a phone interview yesterday.

"We will question first and foremost, and we will question the legal basis of the persons who did it. There are certain things the DAR can decide on, but whether a contract is rescinded is for the courts to say," he said.

The Luisita management said its legal consultants met yesterday afternoon following reports that the DAR would announce its decision to the Luisita farmers' petition to revoke the SDO early next week.

Agrarian issue

Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser C. Pangandaman had said that the DAR had jurisdiction over the Luisita case. He said the farmers' petition was on "agrarian issue" that should be addressed by the DAR.

Mendoza, however, maintained that the DAR would violate Section 10 Article 13 of the Constitution, which provides against the non-impairment of obligation of contract, if it moves to cancel the SDO agreement.

"It's a contract is valid and existing, and duly complied with, and DAR comes up with a order that revokes this, then that is an impairment of this obligation," he said.

He said the HLI has "all the proof" that it has complied with all the requirements of the contract, including the distribution of the HLI shares and three-percent production share, the awarding of home lots.

118.9 M shares distributed

In a letter to DAR dated June 8, the HLI reported that it had distributed 118 million shares to 11,195 farm workers as of April. The original farmer beneficiaries numbered around 6,000, HLI said.

The 118 million shares represented the total shares of farm worker beneficiaries in the HLI representing 33.26 percent of the HLI stocks, which the agreement stipulated should be distributed within 10 years or by 2019.

"We decided to go ahead with the distribution of the shares because there are people making so many out of it, so to settle everything, we advanced the distribution. We hoped it would be an act of good faith to show that we intend to comply with everything," Mendoza said.

He reiterated farmers who claimed during the town group discussion held by the DAR that they signed the agreement without understanding the terms and benefits, and who did not know how to use their stock certificates.

Why only now?

Mendoza said it was not even the management of the HLI but non-government organizations and DAR officials who explained the SDO to farmers during the two referenda in May and October 2005, when 96 percent of farmers voted to approve the SDO agreement.

"Even to this, those who cut us down right have no right to speak of ... If they didn't understand it, they should have said something earlier, not after 10, 17 years," he said.

The farmers asked the DAR to nullify the SDO and distribute the lands to farmers on a pattern submitted in October 2003 and reiterated by another petition in December of the same year.

The DAR created task force Luisita to investigate the farmers' allegations of SDO agreement violations only last last year in the wake of a violent dispersales Luisita that killed seven people and hurt scores of workers on strike.

Why so fast?

"You can't railroad this. The process by which this SDO agreement was approved took more than a year. This resolution can't be done informally, officially, and unconditionally," Mendoza said.

"First, did the six-line memorandum find flaws even call a consensus between to see who voted and didn't vote? Who it done without coercion? Next, asking the exact questions were ... he cannot see had a referendum, and we went through the whole process," he said.

SUPER BUFFALO at the Philippine Carabao Center Headed for Hiding

Coming soon from carabao laboratory: Guyito clone

From page A1

The cambos, of which there are an estimated 3.2 million in the Philippines, is a national symbol because of its role in everything from pulling carts to producing meat and milk.

But dairy cambos produce only a relatively small amount of milk, on average of 3 liters (cha), according to Liberato Cruz, executive director of the government-run Philippine Carabao Center.

The aim is to replicate a "super buffalo" that would boost the genetic makeup and milk production of the native water buffalo, the cambos, said Cruz.

"We are now in the process of transferring the cloned embryos to a carrabao (cambo) mother," he said yesterday.

Thanks to Dolly

"By the middle of next year we can expect some live animals."

The Philippines is not usually known for technological innovation, but Cruz said cloning had become easier and less expensive since Dolly the sheep, the first mammal cloned, entered the world in 1997.

Brazil has created clones of cattle, including an endangered cow species native to the area.

Utah said researchers in the state had created the embryos by fusing genetic material from somatic cells taken from a Bulgarian water buffalo's ear with the eggs of local cambos.

The Philippines has imported about 1,000 Bulgarian buffalo, which are descendants of a high-yielding Murrah breed from India, Cruz said.

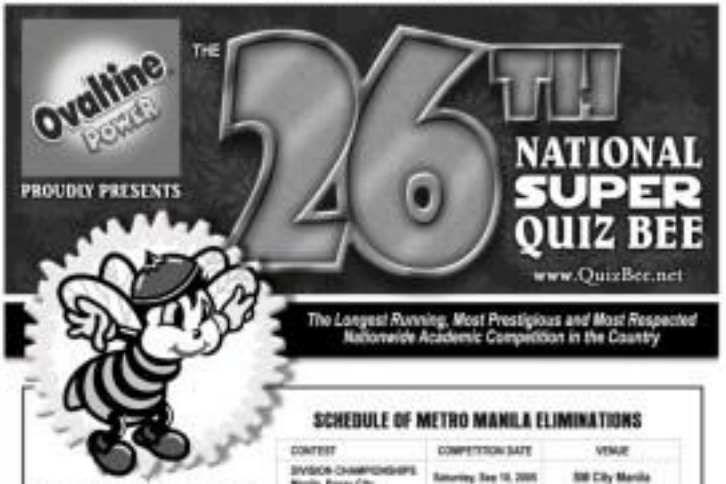
Higher-yielding

"In India, where the animal numbers around 90 million, [buffaloes] are routinely producing 20 liters per day," he said. "I would consider those animals as the super buffalo, but they are not in mine."

Cruz said the plan was to obtain enough sperm from cloned male superbuffalo to start a widespread insemination program in the Philippines that would return higher-yielding cambos.

He said there was no danger of the Philippine carabao being instantly replaced by a new breed of super buffalo because "there were genetically pure pools of carabao that would be preserved."

"In terms of the future viewing of these animals getting extinct, it's not going to happen," Cruz said. Inquirer



Jarques back, hit raw deal in US

OUT OF GAS. So many people had been stuck for so long in traffic-clogged highway that fuel shortages were not uncommon. Texas Army National Guard trucks were ordered to provide motorists with gasoline. AFP/TEXAS NATIONAL GUARD/HO

One of biggest exodus ever empties ...

From page A1

cause sailors Aug. 29 as a Category 4.

The unprecedented flight from the flood-prone Houston, the nation's fourth-largest city with a population of more than 2 million, left clogged high ways at a near standstill, frustrating hundreds of thousands of people whose cars and tempers were overheating.

The storm slammed its first ravine before it move his land ashore as ridden, by veteran deal of apparent heat-related fatalities while stuck in a massive traffic jam of Texas evacuees.

A bus carrying elderly evacuees caught fire and was evident by emphasis, state early Friday on a gridlocked highway near Dallas, killing as many as 24 people, authorities said.

The bus, with about 45 people on board, had been traveling since Thursday. The passengers were from a nursing home in Bellaire, an upscale enclave within Houston.

Some vehicles that had run out of gas were left stranded on the highway.

Bumper-to-bumper

"It can't get much worse, 100 yes in an hour," recounted Willie Harper, 76, who was heading out of Houston and trying to get to Highway 59 near in the northeast Texas. "It's frustrating, bumper-to-bumper."

State officials scrambled to contain several inbound highways to seven-lanes outbound traffic, but many people were waiting so long they ran out of gas and were forced to push.

"We know you're out there," Texas Gov. Rick Perry said of the mass exodus that extended well into Louisiana. "We understand there's been hard shortages."

Texas Army National Guard trucks were escorted by police to directly provide motorists with gasoline. The state was also working to get more than 500,000 liters of gas to hard-hit Houston in the Houston area.

Hurricane exodus

By late Thursday night, the traffic was at least moving slowly, but was still backed up for about 160 kilometers in what Wiley called "one of the largest mass evacuations in American history."

Some people, fearing the storm's fierce winds, were not evacuated early Friday closed their doors to new patients after they were swamped with heat exhaustion victims after temperatures reached 37 degrees Celsius.

Regional shelters were already full, and many people slept in the cars outside overwhelmed hotels.

Unpredictable

Researchers said it appeared Hurricane and Galveston could avoid a direct hit as this turned slightly to the east, threatening only its winds the Beaumont and Port Arthur area about 120 kilometers of Houston.

Officials warned Rita remained unpredictable, "I don't think anyone in the Gulf Coast or east of Louisiana," said David Paulison, acting director of the federal Emergency Management Agency said.

The first rain bands were expected before nightfall Friday Friday in Matagorda and the Gulf Coast of Texas, period not hereafter (Sunday here). Economists warned of the possibility of a storm surge of 4.5 to 6 meters, battering waves and rain of up to 20 centimeters (13 inches) along the Texas and western Louisiana coast.

Also New Orleans

At 5 a.m. EDT (5 p.m. Friday here), Rita was centered about 405 km southeast of Galveston and was moving to the west northwest at about 14.5 kph. Its winds were 220 kph, down from 280 kph earlier in the day.

Hurricane warnings were in effect from PINTO Island, Texas, to Morgan City, Louisiana, and the Sabine River. Tropical storm warnings were in effect for Rita would make landfall as a "dangerous hurricane of at least Category 3 intensity."

Tropical storm warnings also were in effect east and north to include New Orleans, still crippled by Hurricane Katrina. Rita's windy rains Thursday were the first since Katrina and the latest rain for 73.1 to 12.3 cm (3 to 5 inches) in the coming days—dangerously close to the amount engineers said would send floodwaters pouring back into some 1/3 by neighborhoods.

Prepared for worst

"Hurricane Rita is a very danger ous storm," said New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin. "We're not letting our guard down."

President George W. Bush, per to shake off criticism of his leadership during the Katrina crisis, warned that officials "at every level of government are preparing for the worst." Bush planned to visit Texas on Friday to view the emergency preparations.

Many who were trying to leave said they were taking food from Katrina, which smashed into the Louisiana and Mississippi coastal areas on Aug 29. Its force broke levees in New Orleans, flooding the city where thousands had been unable or unwilling to flee.

Katrina killed at least 1,300 people and displaced as many as 1 million.

Ag (Reuters), Associated Press, Bloomberg News, Agence France-Presse and staff reported from the computers at Mission Control and tracked the international space station over to the Russian space agency.

The crew of Expedition Louisiana, up to 300,000 residents along the state's southeast coast were urged to evacuate and state officials planned to send in buses to take refugees. AP, Reuters and AFP

13 oil refineries closed

THE TEXAS AND LOUISIANA COAST is home to the nation's biggest concentration of oil refineries. Environmentalists warned of the possibility of a toxic spill from the 87 chemical plants and petroleum installations that represent more than one-fourth of US refining capacity.

As Rita threatened the region's oil industry, Exxon Mobil said it was closing its Baytown, Texas, refinery, the largest US oil refinery, and one in Beaumont. 144 km east.

The offshore Gulf region produces a third of US oil. The closings caused to at least 13 the number of US refineries out of commission from Katrina and Rita, which have shut 20 percent of US refining capacity and caused the specter of serious gasoline shortages to be shown ahead.

Gonzales case goes to Supreme Court

From page A1

and police safety because Gonzales ... will not be able to perform his work," Tuberculosis said.

Malacañang yesterday sent a letter to the Senate blue ribbon committee chaired by Sen. Joker Arroyo formally asking it to reconsider its decision.

"We're requesting [that] Secretary Gonzales be given consideration..." Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita told reporters at an informal morning afternoon of the committee-on-appointments in Malacañang.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye had earlier revealed the principle of separation of powers and urged the Senate to reconsider its decision and immediately order Gonzales' release from the chamber's custody.

But the senators have virtually put themselves on a collision course with Malacañang.

"He (Gonzales) remains in the custody of the Senate until he answers the questions. If he talks, he will be released," Arroyo said in an interview earlier yesterday.

Arroyo insisted that the 17-member committee's decision last Wednesday that Gonzales be cited for contempt and detained would stay until he members willingness to answer questions on the government's decision with the 121-km line Wraith-12-F in another hearing.

Under the contempt, which has drawn widespread criticism, Gonzales is to each 01 guests for Philippine projects including renewing the Constitution.

"The request for Gonzales' release is unacceptable," Arroyo said.

But he said the Senate would accord Gonzales the "respect and deference befitting his rank and senses while under detention."

The senators cited Gonzales for contempt and ordered him detained after he subsequently made questions about the "double contract throughout the three-hour committee hearing on Wednesday.

Verbal abuse

He is confined in the Philippine Heart Center in Quezon City for treatment of hypertension under the custody of the Office of the Senate Sergeant-at-Arms.

According to Gonzales, the basis for the cited committee "abused" its right because the Constitution also provides that "the rights of persons appearing in or affected by (Senate or House) in quiries shall be respected."

She pointed out that transcripts of the hearing would show that Gonzales' "the subject of verbal abuse, having been called a man with a flawed character and even ...a pimp."

"Contempt powers of the Senate, being drastic and extraordinary, should not be exercised to undue necessity," Tolentino said.

She cited a Supreme Court decision saying "the power to punish for contempt should be exercised on the preservative and not vindictive principle."

She said that as a member of the executive branch, Gonzales should not have been cited for contempt because co-equal branches of government were "not subject to contempt powers against each other."

Executive privilege

Ermita said the letter he sent to the Senate blue ribbon committee stated "specific provisions" of the law on why Gonzales could not be compelled to answer the senators' questions on the "double contract."

He said those included the law on the exercise of executive privilege, the separation of powers between the executive and legislative branches, and the observance of confidentiality "especially on matters involving the act of a member of the executive and the foreigners of the President."

Ermita said that he had seen and talked with Gonzales, and that the letter "seemed OK."

In a statement issued by Lacson in the day, Ermita said Gonzales' inability to answer certain questions at the Sept. 21 hearing was "based on national security and executive privilege."

Disrespect for Senate

"The rule on executive privilege is rooted in the principle of separation of powers of the co-equal branches of government. It envisages impassable barriers from disclosing sensitive and delicate information," Ermita said.

He said executive privilege "applies[it] to information only matters."

"This kind of information cannot be pried open by a co-equal branch of government," he said.

Ermita said the position taken by Gonzales should not be taken as disrespect toward a co-equal branch of government.

"Instead, it should be taken as fealty to the sense of responsibilities allocated to the different departments of government by the Father of the Constitution," he said.

But Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan said Malacañang was elevating disrespect for the chamber by demanding that it release Gonzales from its custody.

"Misleading a row supporting the Senate as a co-equal branch. Disrespect did not begin with us. It began with a secretary refusing to answer questions and giving evasive answers," Pangilinan said in an interview.

"They talk respect from a co-equal branch when they're not willing to give it themselves," he said.

Sen. Richard Gordon said he acted in the best interest of Gonzales when he cited her in contempt during a phone conversation with Gabriel Claudio, President Macapagal-Arroyo's adviser on public affairs, late Thursday night.

From Gordon's recollection, Claudio called the call to ask that the Senate "should take pity on Gonzales because he is sick."

"I told him that the Senate couldn't do anything about it because of committing any crime against the Gonzales case ... the Senate is one of the citizens in the US or anywhere else in the world," he said.

Jarque urged President Macapagal-Arroyo and the US Embassy in Manila to look into the incident because Filipinos were losing "falsely accused" of being terrorists and "targeted of their dignity by the double treatment of arrogant American immigration officials."

The 'same spies'

"They are falsely accusing Filipinos here, because they know that we are poor, they know our current preaching about it in America. But as long as we are united, these Americans, their days are numbered," Jarque said in a mixture of English and Filipino.

"These are the same spies who intervene in Philippine politics and gather extraneous information that is to the United States," he said in a phone interview.

"We should denounce this kind of intervention and take decisive measures against Americans entering the country too," he said.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita previously said US authorities might have information in deciding to deport Jarque.

"I have learned Jarque as we both served in Catabato before and I know he is no terrorist but we could not criticize the Americans on the basis they used in deporting him because they have their own information," Ermita said in Filipino.

"Probably we should be more careful and sure this he is meant for all of us," he said.

The Jarques also expressed dismay at the Philippine consular officials in the United States who failed to help them.

"But it seems to treat us as Filipino citizen, they won't treat you," Jarque said in Filipino.

No help from DFA

He denounced a consular official named Jocelyn Garcia for her "lack of sympathy" when they sought help from the office.

"We were hoping they would be spring-mate at least or possibly assist or help my dad like what they've doing now with Michael Ray Aquino, but he was killed to give any help at all," said Raymundo Jr.

His dad's remains failed to speak to Fajnzo in LA, but he "was not available."

"My parents received no help from the 50th Department of Foreign Affairs. My sister went to consular there but they said they could not do anything at all. It was my sister who did everything to bring them back home safely," Raymundo Jr. said.

Jalandoni also condemned the Philippine government "for failing to provide timely assistance to Jarque and his wife, despite the fact that the former military general is the security consultant of a government corporation."

Banned from US

Raymundo Jr. said his sister was informed by a US immigration officer that a new memorandum from Washington was issued last Sept. 8 banning "all foreigners with criminal records" from entering the United States.

But NBI spokesperson Marilyn Bucaral said that Jarque was immediately released after it was verified that he had no standing warrants of arrest.

"They were not arrested or issued warrant in the past, but all of those had been recalled so there was no legal basis to hold him," Bucaral said. With reports from Marjorie Ortiz and Carlo B. Gomez, PDI/Vince Rievera, and AP

Fishers' group snub NBI on dump issue

By Blanche S. Rivera

THEY ARE BARANAY MIND-ED and don't like to silence.

Members of the militant fisherfolk group Bantayog ng Inang Kalikasan confronted the National Bureau of Investigation's (NBI) operatives the chance to explain their connection with the lack of clean drinking garbage from Quezon and Manila.

The 13 Bantayog's members insisted appointed in a press conference yesterday outside the Quezon and Intelligence Enforcement Secretary Michael T. Defensor for allowing the operations of a controlled dump near Fishpond in Dasmariñas, Cavite.

Fisherfolk-activists claim the raids de Asmin said he and 12 others skipped the meetings on Sept. 23 and 22 upon the order of their lawyers.

"The interventions of the NBI in the case is highly questionable," said Secretary Mayor Toby Tiangco's allegations against as set purely out of political harassment and plain character assassination," de Asmin said in a statement.

Brother De Asmin said his brother Jeong the NBI also issued subpoenas to Celso Rabanta, DENR Calabarzon Orlando de Vera, Adriano del Rosario, Rancho San Diego, Rey Mangan, Malinta Cruz, Arthur Burgos, Isidro dela Cruz, Cecilio Amoroso and Pepe Jose del Rosario.

Fisherfolk-activist said Tiangco had asked the NBI's help in stopping protest actions against dumping in the 1.5-hectare Fortune Tobacco property operated by the Philippine Ecology Systems Inc. (PHILECO).

The group said Tiangco had become "desperate" after a regional trial court in Malolos City granted last week his petition to stop the Manila-mandated governments from continuing smoke-belching and methane-spewing dumping.

The Malolos court said Tiangco failed to prove that this would cause irreparable damage to the garbage contractors and the municipality of Navotas.

The Bantayog's members were summoned to appear before the NBI's antifraud-tapping, kidnapping, and robbery division alleged, by for committing illegal activities.

"How can we fight for clean air and change which is not left as one of the buildings in Avenue? Give us a break," de Asmin said.

Fisherfolk-activists blamed the Inc parliament of Environment and Natural Resources for failing to address the reputable land-mess Tiangco and residents over the controversial disposal facility.

Inmates want visit 'rights' back

By Jocelyn R. Uy

"JUST SEE HUMANE treatment" or the resumption of conjugal visits is what several drug convicts at the New Bilibid Prisons (NBP) are demanding.

In a letter to the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), some 71 prisoners, mostly convicted for illegal drug use, complained about the current situation at Building 14 of the NBP.

"The conditions in this building are very inhuman and cruel. We have been deprived of our right to conjugal visits," the prisoners said in a letter to CHR Director Gilbert Boiser.

Building 14 was like any other building in the maximum security compound where "problematic" inmates were confined, according to NBP Supt. Jennifer Leopoldo, deputy superintendent.

The 71 prisoners alleged they were transferred to Building 14, which they branded as the "isolation cell" by solitary system.

They claimed only prisoners who violated the rules of the penitentiary were supposed to be in the cell.

"We heard we were transferred here because we are all drug addicts," they said. Only a few days were us, the inmates then asked for drug tests to disprove the charges.

They also complained about the three-layer screen separating them from visitors, as it limited their interactions with their families, noting the prison could give "special treatment" to those who did something really unbelievable, detectable and inadvisable.

The inmates wanted to know why ninth convicts enjoyed conjugal visits or that they did not.

Leopoldo, however, told the inmates there were no violations of human rights. Inmates who violate prison rules and regulations were brought to the building, he added.

Atty. Robert Organo, NBP head chaplain, said the inmates can comply with illegal drugs inside the prison.

Leopoldo said the conjugal visit was not a right but a privilege given to the prisoners and could be cancelled anytime.

TOUGH LUCK
Residents of Barrio Corazon in Tondo, Manila have to contend with muddy roads because of heavy rains in the past few days. Hundreds of makeshift houses have been rebuilt in the area after a fire ate up 1.5 kilometers of the squatter in April. MARIANNE

Caloocan studes warned against off-campus gang

POLICE YESTERDAY WARNED students of the University of the East in Caloocan City and nearby schools to be careful after a 17-year-old boy was killed while waiting for a ride on Samson Road.

Members of the fraternity Tau Gamma Phi, the suspects were school, waiting ... to grab a cell phone or drugs a backpack," police officer, who requested not to be identified, said.

Lt. Gutierrez is just a block away from the city's police headquarters.

The gang, the police officer said, canvassed students waiting for a ride or just walking particularly at night. Clashes are rare, usually ended at 8 p.m. He said the gang did not hesitate to harm victims who refused to give their belongings.

Some gang members had already been identified and apprehended, the officer said.

He added that victims had identified the group as behind the series of cell phone snatching and hold-up incidents in the area.

"Our operation for all the gang's members is ongoing," the officer said.

The most recent incident involving the gang, he said, was the stabbing of Marlon Adino Aquino of 402 FEUR compound last August 175.

Police reports showed that charges had been filed against Rizalde Mat-ipid alias Tol, 20, and a resident of 107 A. Samson Road, in the city prosecutor's office.

Local police have yet to arrest the suspect known to be a member of the Bad Boys gang.

The police report said the stabbing was a case of mistaken identities.

The report added that the suspect stabbed Aquino after mistaking him for a member of a rival gang with whom his group had an ongoing feud.

The victim was standing in front of an internet shop on Samson Road around 10:30 p.m. when he was attacked by the suspect.

GOTHIC NG BARANGAY HOME OPEN
FOURTEEN Barkis ng Barangay Bell were opened recently in Quezon City. The Bell offers grants over the summer vacations, bed bed medicines, and seven kinds of antibiotics at affordable prices. At the opening of one of the outlets even (from left): Rep. Maximo Castelo Diaza, Mayor Tony Belmonte, Vice President Noli de Castro and Barrio Bautista-Pepe

Hacienda Luisita: Cory's pain in the neck

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN Reform (DAR) is about to resolve the land conflicts dispute at the Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac.

Chances are, the resolution will favor the workers.

Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser C. Pangandaman says his office has already given the go-ahead to the controversial case involving the land holdings owned by the Cojuangcos, the family of former President Corazon C. Aquino.

Hacienda Luisita was one covered by the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law passed in 1988 during Ms Aquino's term.

Instead of subdividing the 5,000 hectares land and distributing it to its farmer tenants, the Luisita manage, more than distant stock certificates to tenant farmers who were mostly illiterate.

The stock certificates turned out to be just pieces of paper. Until now, the tenant-farmers have not received dividends based on the profits of Hacienda Luisita. They continue to depend on the rice sugar cane of the Cojuangcos.

Last year, violence erupted at the hacienda when policemen and soldiers pushed through the gates line of striking workers at the hacienda. Seven people were killed.

The only comment that Ms Aquino made in connection to the violent incident was that she would pray that peace would come to the family-owned hacienda.

Pray, my eye! Ma'am, you can pray all you want but if you don't lose your hideaway, especially those working for you in your backyards, will God listen to your prayers?

You can't even solve the labor problems in your hacienda, and yet you want to solve the problems of the entire country?

There is a term that aptly describes what the former President is doing to these scandalous issues: Depraving.

Ms Aquino used to be a close ally of President Macapagal-Arroyo. She supported her policies from day one when GMA was proclaimed Chief Executive on EDSA 2.

What went wrong? Why has Cory joined the chorus for GMA's resignation?

The reason is Hacienda Luisita. Ms Aquino promises that GMA has not done enough in helping the family resolve the labor-land dispute at Hacienda Luisita. She thinks the farmers has not ordered her labor secretary to intervene in the dispute, by filing charges against the Luisita management.

Ms Aquino accused the bridge during the controversy about the "fiscal" signs by giving to the popular dancer for 10000, resignation.

But the administration is not ruling out Ricardo Ko itself in solving it. It's getting back at the former President by digging up her own skeletons in the closet, the dispute at Hacienda Luisita.

Let's look back to another irregularity perpetrated by the past to save Hacienda Luisita from ruin.

Of course, the Boo bongalaray was the Cojuangco's going around the Agrarian Reform Law by distributing those tendous stocks to their own tenant-workers, when they should have subdivided the vast hacienda among the workers.

The other irregularity was the illegal diverting of the company's labor force in the 1990s so that it would not classify as Hacienda Luisita as land for agrarian reform purposes. The farmers of mats of gigas lily lank Bautista, Hong Kong Sanbank the hands of the dominant labor.

I came to know about the because I talked with some engineers at the Department of Public Works and Highways.

I don't know how Ms Aquino's family would choose to solve the problem at the heart of their estate.

INQUIRER Platinum Code

What code means to me (pop all one word) with the purpose of cleaning?

Find the answer to the question in the highlighted letters above. Highlighted letters may be used more than once. Send in your answer to (0918)* for Smart, Globe, and Sun Cellular subscribers and get a chance to win in the weekly or grand draws!

*To join, initially send PBN <space> (0) <space> <space> <space>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

METRO

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2005

EZ2 [illegible] SUERTRES [illegible] FOUR DIGIT [illegible]

MEGALOTTO 6/45 3 12 17 22 35 36

P28,538,518.50

Days numbered for Panay Avenue trees

By DJ Yap

ONLY A HANDFUL of trees and some [illegible] coconut palms still remain on Panay Avenue, Quezon City. Most of them were cut down by a construction firm to widen the road connecting Timog Avenue and Edsa.

But two environmentalists are waging a lonely battle to keep them standing.

For more than a year now, the trees on Panay Avenue stood in the middle of a legal battle between their protectors and a construction company contracted by the city government for a road-widening project.

Rosewinda Ejercito and Jane Martinez, long-time residents of Barangay South Triangle, are raising against time to their bid to keep Panay's trees alive.

In October, the 60-day temporary restraining order (TRO) issued by the Court of Appeals against M.R. Vargas Construction will expire. The appellate court temporarily barred the company from cutting the trees on a petition by the concerned lovers.

Ejercito and Martinez accused M.R. Vargas workers of cutting almost 53 trees, including narra, mahogany, ipil-ipil and Shanghai boxtree species without permits from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Philippine Ecozone Authority (PEZA).

An April 12 tree inventory of Panay showed by the Department of Environment Natural Resources-National Capital Region (DENR-NCR) showed that some 53 trees were "lost" or cut down while nine trees were "damaged" or had injured roots.

Before the DENR could conduct another inventory, Ejercito counted only about five trees left. Though the 24 remote palms seemed mostly intact, Ejercito claimed about five were cut.

No permit needed

Quezon City road construction division chief Ernesto Salvador, however, said M.R. Vargas did not need a permit from the DENR.

He cited a 2004 letter by DENR-NCR regional executive director Gerasmo Jorda saying the authorized representative of the head of agency or political subdivision with jurisdiction over the area could approve the cutting of trees on public roads for public safety as provided for in Presidential Decree 953.

M.R. Vargas project manager Emmanuel Ingreso said the company donated several saplings to the city parks administration, in exchange for the trees they cut down.

He admitted, that the PCA had yet to give them a permit for the cutting of the coconut palms, though the company had already paid the fees.

In 2004, the city government approved the widening of the Panay Avenue east segment to 12 meters from the original six, connecting of four lanes. Four meters on each side of the road would be set aside for sidewalks, greening and beautification.

Alternative road

In a 2005 letter to the Senate Blue Ribbon Committee secretary Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. said the infrastructure project, covered by the 2004 city budget, was expected to decongest Panay Avenue and serve as an alternate road to the congested Quezon Avenue. Quezon City awarded the multi-million peso contract to M.R. Vargas.

In 2004, Ejercito and Martinez filed for an injunction before Judge Maria Cleresita Jacob of Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 100. They asked for a TRO to prevent the contractor from damaging, removing and chainsaw the structures, as well as killing and injuring trees along Panay.

The pair argued that the benefits provided by the trees in the largely residential area far outweighed the advantages of widening Panay Avenue. The TRO was granted on Oct. 6 but Jacob nullified the same order on Nov. 8, after the respondents claimed the court had not lawfully acquired jurisdiction over them due to an invalid serving of the summons.

The case has since moved to the Court of Appeals as Ejercito and Martinez filed a petition for certiorari protesting Jacob's decision. They have petitioned for a TRO and preliminary injunction against M.R. Vargas to stop the cutting of trees. The TRO was granted on Aug. 5. Though only a few weeks are left before the TRO expires, the two remain hopeful the remaining trees of Panay Avenue can be saved.

SEDONA "THE AFFORDABLE MINIVAN" ***** RATING 05 A.N.T.A.A.

SORENTO 4x4 "CAR OF THE YEAR 2004" TOP 10 ROADSTAR - CIR 2003 TORQUE INTERNATIONAL

"The Best Value For Money"

picanto ELIMINATES GAS PAINS!

K2700 MAS MATIPID! MAS MALAKI! MAS MATIBAY!

KIA MANDALUYONG

KIA MAKATI

KIA LAS PIÑAS

BUSINESS

Your e-mail: [illegible]
Website: [illegible]

Editor Raul O. Marvelo
Assistant Editor Carmen S. Nicolas

'05 BOP surplus seen at $853M

By Doris C. Dumlao

Drop in financial, capital accounts to cut 8-mo gains

THE BANGKO SENTRAL ng Pilipinas sees the country posting a balance of payments surplus of $853 million by the end of this year, reversing a deficit of $262 million in 2004.

The country's BOP surplus hit $1 billion in the first half of the year and $1.29 billion as of August, the expected decline in the capital and financial accounts in the second half, however, would likely cut the surplus in BSP's estimate by December.

BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo said the BSP did not want to announce a higher BOP surplus, mainly in view of the economy's [illegible] global crude oil prices.

"On one hand, we have lower exports while imports are rising because of the high cost of oil," Guinigundo said.

"On the other hand, [new investments Filipinos are/are] investments are doing and there are inflows of foreign investments, both direct and portfolio," he said.

Guinigundo said the BSP's assumption on oil prices had to be [illegible] more conservative values amid rates, but uncertainties remained, particularly in the fourth quarter when fuel consumption is seasonally higher.

From January to August this year, the country's BOP surplus reached $2.29 billion, a turnaround from a deficit of $630 million a year ago. The first eight-month figure was the highest accumulative BOP level seen in the last decade.

The BOP measures the foreign exchange transactions between

B2

WHAT'S INSIDE

Deadline for cell phone dealers set
B3

Cocktails: SC admits co having been duped
B3

CURRENCIES

SYMBOL
PHILIPPINE PESO / U.S. DOLLAR RATE

P56.232 = $1
As of 5 p.m., Sept. 23, 2005

$1 = P56.13bn
As of 5 p.m., Sept. 23, 2005

SOLD: 40.30–40.31
per central bank, Sept. 23, 2005

STOCK MARKET

Market down 0.19%

SHARE PRICES YESTERDAY closed 0.19 percent lower as investors used Thursday's hike in interest rates as an excuse to take some profit after a five-day winning streak, dealers said.

A number of stocks were due for a correction after reaching overbought levels but support for Indo-heavyweight Philippine Long Distance Telephone (PLDT) limited the downside, they added.

The composite index fell 1.38 points to 1,868.67, after trading between 1,862.23 and 1,890.80. Volume was 69.5 million shares worth P181.1 million.

The all-shares index fell 1.52 points to 1,186.88.

AFP

CAP ADMITTED it would be unable to service its debts since it had more liabilities than assets.

CAP gets reprieve from paying claims, debts

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE MAKATI REGIONAL TRIAL COURT ON Thursday allowed beleaguered pre-need giant College Assurance Plan Philippines Inc. to suspend payments to its enrollees and plan holders, the company's lawyer said.

The temporary stay order, penned by Judge Romeo Buena of Branch 61, was issued in line with CAP's petition for rehabilitation, which was scheduled for hearing on Oct. 26.

But while it granted CAP's temporary reprieve from paying claims, the court prohibited the pre-need firm "selling, encumbering, transferring or disposing in any manner any of its properties except in the ordinary course of business."

CAP was also prohibited from making any payment of its outstanding liabilities as of Sept. 8, 2005, the date of the filing of its petition.

Also, the court appointed accountant Bienvenido Marcelo Jr. to serve as CAP's interim rehabilitation receiver.

The order, which was dated Sept. 13, 2005, was received by CAP on Sept. 22, said CAP lawyer Gilbert Reyes.

All creditors and interested parties, including the Securities and Exchange Commission, were directed by the court to file their comments on or opposition to CAP's rehabilitation plan 10 days before the hearing on Oct. 26.

CAP—with more than 700,000 plan holders—was the third pre-need company that had sought court protection due to financial problems. The two others were Pacific Plans Inc. and Fortune Plans Phils. Inc.

Reyes earlier said CAP decided to go to court for rehabilitation to keep in business going. An insurance source, however, said it was to preempt the SEC's plan to take over the management of the pre-need firm, which was feared to lead to the company's liquidation.

"It was becoming increasingly difficult to work out a solution without prejudicing the interests of the plan holders. The whole thrust of this rehabilitation plan is we don't want to end CAP (as a business)," Reyes had said.

CAP's licenses to operate and sell plans were suspended in August 2004.

In its petition for rehabilitation, CAP submi[illegible]

see REHAB on B3

Cell phone dealers given until yearend to register

By Carlos S. Reyes

THE NATIONAL TELECOM commission Commission is giving thousands of mobile phone dealers and repair shops until the end of the year to comply with a cease-and-order for them to register with the regulator.

The Commission will cite policy adopted last year behind a nationwide information campaign, including in the launch next week age of a program called "NTC on Wheels."

Like the Bureau of Internal Revenue, which rolls out its "Bir on Wheels" program during the tax season, the Commission is conducting an information campaign and bringing its program to malls where mobile phone shops and service centers abound.

NTC chief Ronnie Solis said the program has no intention of apprehending thousands of phone dealers and repair shop operators that have yet to enlist with the agency that he admitted that the law registration system has been discouraging.

The NTC estimated that there are between 10,000 and 15,000 mobile phone dealers and between 5,000 and 10,000 cellular phone repair shops in the Manila-Capital Region alone.

As of September, however, only 300 service centers and 600 phone dealers in the NCR have registered with the NTC.

Including all other regions, only 1,500 repair shops and 1,000 mobile phone dealers headed the NTC's order to register. The registry's six-month ends effect last Sept. 25, 2004.

"This is going to be purely an information drive and not an apprehension drive), We are also putting up registration booths in malls and areas where the shops are mostly be found," said the NTC chief.

A DURIAN vendor sorts varieties of newly harvest durian along Aroki Street in Davao City at the peak of the harvest season which ends in October. During prime drops to as low as ₱20 a kilo during this period.

RAYMOND BALUYOT/INQUIRER.NET

Employers want strike restrictions

By Rommel W. Domingo

THE EMPLOYERS' CONFEDERATION of the Philippines yesterday urged a court over a proposed amendments to the Labor Code that causes restrictions on workers' strikes.

Resty president Rene T. Sarmiento said House Bill No. 3725, filed by Antipolo rep. Crispin Beltran and other party-list whose, runs counter to economic and social stability "and to life, personal safety and health."

Sarmiento said the Labor Secretary should not be stripped of the power to assume jurisdiction over labor disputes or strikes that put the nation's interest at stake.

Under the law, labor disputes and strikes could be put under compulsory arbitration through the National Labor Relations Commission.

Workers in strategic industries such as transportation, communications, like airports and docks, are barred from staging strikes that would disrupt the normal operations of society at large.

Employers like Bobwin say this prohibition robs the working class of their right to set collectively and further their interests against those of management.

Sarmiento said that most of their neighboring countries like Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand have laws that curtail strikes when they threaten to harm the economy or stability of the country.

The employer said even US President George W. Bush has used his powers to intervene in a number of labor disputes where a strike or lockout was deemed to harm the economy.

"If we can't imagine the havoc that would befall the country if, for example, strikes are staged in industries like the generation and distribution of power supply, the production and distribution of oil products, communication facilities, banking, transportation, supply and distribution of food, stuff, and hospitals," he said.

SOP opera

Conrado R. Banzet III

HOWEVER, SOMEDAY SOMEone is going to catch the attention of the Bureau of Internal Revenue, because down here in my barangay as in the U.S., you know—spelled out!

The SOB remains in a bad mood these days, even after its having filed hundreds of tax evasion cases against high-profile people, such as boards of businessmen, a few celebrities, and one but only one public official.

The other day the SOB filed an other ₱84-million tax evasion case against a company that had a high profile personality among its executives.

And so, maybe out of fear, nobody today wants to come any where near the SOB, much less inquire with the bureau about issues of national significance.

Okay, if everybody chooses to be quiet about it, I just have to ask the question burning in the minds of thousands of taxpayers.

And that is, do we have a new SOB commissioner named "Bong?"

SO, IN FACT, we do!

The name of the new SOB commissioner is Jose Balbag, and his nickname is "Jojo." He was a long-time tax lawyer before he joined the SOB as deputy commissioner just a couple of years ago, together with now-resigned SOB commissioner Guillermo Parayno Jr., who remains at large even after the Feast (10 months).

The big question, anyway actually concerns the SOB collection last month.

Considering an unnamed official of the finance department's Bureau of Treasury's reports said the SOB rearranged its collection by some ₱1.4 billion, I hear.

That the SOB would want to claim more revenue collection than it actually got, can worry even the most late-abiding private citizenizens.

True, the SOB may be forced to reinvent the "restructured" collection basis; and when's the SOB is in such a bad mood, you can never tell sales is going to get hurt.

Moreover, the report put the SOB in a bad light, to credibility, because—according to it—just an ultra-rare administration is busy with a serious tax campaign.

It is a big issue, and it gets the business sector worried, because it implies that the Oscar Bulling, and his enchanters is "Jojo." He was a long-time tax lawyer before he joined the SOB as deputy commissioner and later as deputy commissioner for operations.

Balbag is known as a tough trouble-with-foreign creditors, because somebody in the Bureau discounting had a bright idea to shutdown the international sources.

And so I have to ask finding the questions possibilities. In your sick some thing, and did the BIR overstate its collection last month?

Well, if the SOB did, according to Balbag, the BIR has been overstating its collection all the time. What it did was nothing out of the ordinary he said.

You know—it was SOB for what is this all about—SOP opera? Sorry.

BASED on the report, which in turn was based on the leak from an anonymous treasury official, the SOB pointed to revenue collection some ₱1.4 billion in discrepancy comp ton on Tuesday.

It should not have been done, according to the reward, was the anonymous source, because of a new policy adopted by this core administration.

In effect, the new policy says that the SOB should not count as "collection" certain non-cash tax payment of other government entities.

One particular case, supposedly involved documentary stamp taxes worth ₱1.4 billion or those particular T-bills.

If that is the case, according to Balbag, the BIR only learned about the new policy through the news reports.

Actually, the BIR has been counting as revenue the non-cash tax payments of government corporate, as so-called journal entry vouchers, or more book-entry.

The same was true with the withholding tax on T-bills, since it is the payment of the buyer, which was reported to the BIR as no collection remittance advice.

As for the due stamp tax on T-bills, the BIR has been reporting it as revenue collection ever since Magellan was still a boy in rout.

It's just that he that one particular case involving T-bills, the bureau of Treasury wanted the BIR to remove the due stamp tax.

Still, according to Balbag, an official of the Bureau of Treasury informed a regional director of the BIR later that the BIR could count the ₱1.4-billion due stamp tax as revenue for August.

In short, there is no window dressing whatsoever. Wierd

HERE'S hoot that the leak from the Bureau of Treasury might give the BIR a public blackeye, which it hardly needs nowadays.

And so the BIR may have to thrash things out with the Bureau of Treasury once and for all, even if the BIR could not flash out the coward, um, the anonymous source.

Seeing sad they may have to sit down with Finance Secretary Margarito Teves as soon as he comes back from the United States.

Well, I think they know do in this budget deficit-challenged core administration of Gloriaetta, the credibility of the BIR can be everything.

If the SOB really dreams by "overstating" its collection, what examples does it show to businesses about cheating by "understating" their income?

Thus, the media offensive of SOB on high-profile tax cases may just go, well, "pawah"—with some pillow stuffed in.

High electricity costs hit Philex Mining margins

By Christine Esplanat

PHILEX MINING CORP IS FEELING the smoldering electricity rates that have cut margins from high-market prices of copper and gold on to the bottomline.

Philex Mining executive vice president and chief operating officer Jose Ernesto Villafana Jr. said in an interview that electricity cost for mine the last quarter have risen to ₱500 million a month.

"This electricity bill has nearly 19 percent from the ₱84 million a month we paid last year to run the mines," explained Villafana.

He said the company would have to negotiate with the state-owned National Power Corp. on how electricity costs could be curbed.

He noted that the high cost of electricity may eat up revenues that would be generated with the completion of its 7MW mini-hydro line project for its Padcal Lepanto Gold Mines as it becomes operational next month.

French firms eye rural electrification

By Abigail L. Ho

JETTER MUSHROOM'S 17.5-MILLION euro (₱1.2-billion) contract with the National Power Corp. for the electrification of 1,129 barangays in Masbate, French consortium Jetta-Manila Technology Corp. (Jetmatech) and ETDE of Singapore Consortium are now considering purchasing another 3 million euros (₱300 million) for other similar projects.

In an interview during the Power/Gentech conference and exhibition, Jetmatech senior vice president and chief operating officer Philippe Sanders said the consortium would look at how the implementation of the Masbate project progresses before making its decision.

If the project is successful, he said the group could fund other rural electrification projects of the government.

He said it is not ruled out too that the consortium could fund would depend on the Department of Energy's rural electrification plan.

The ₱1.2-billion contract, which Sanders and the French consortium signed last Wednesday was under the Philippine Rural Electrification Services (PRES) Project, an initiative that aims to electrify all barangays nationwide by 2006 and provide 100-percent individual household connection by 2017.

Funding for the program will come from the 22.5-million euro (₱1.3 billion) French Financial Protocol that the Philippine and French governments signed in September last year.

The consortium is looking at earmarking the remaining ₱300 million of this French Financial Protocol for similar rural electrification projects.

The Masbate electrification project is expected to benefit 14,000 households in 126 of the province's barangays when it is completed two years from now.

Sanders also disclosed that Masbate has the lowest electrification level in the country covering only 16.38 percent of the province as of end-July.

The state firm provides electricity to the province through its 3 Small Power Utilities Group (Spug) using three power plants: the 2.5-megawatt (MW) Blakdiesel power plant I, the 1.6-MW Power Barge 116 and the 1.4-MW Power Barge 117.

According to Sanders' estimates, peak demand in the province is roughly 10 MW.

LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

ITB No. 03-051-05R

The Light Rail Transit Authority (LRTA) invites duly licensed security agencies to apply for eligibility and to bid for:

BIDDING FOR THE JANITORIAL SERVICES CONTRACT OF LRT LINE 1 & 2 SYSTEMS

	BUDGET	CONTRACT PERIOD
LINE 1 AREA (R.I.P.)	PHP 8,258,160.00	12 Months
LINE 2 AREA I (Depot & LRTA)	PHP 6,460,381.20	12 Months

Bid Documents may be secured from the LRTA Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat at the Ground Floor, Administration Bldg., LRTA Compound, Aurora Blvd., Pasay City, Metro Manila, during regular office hours from October 3-10, 2005 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Three Thousand Pesos (P3,000.00) per area to be participated in by prospective bidders.

Site inspection will be held on October 5 & 10, 2005 at 10:00 a.m. For this purpose, all interesting parties, agencies/contractors will meet on November 3, 2005 at the Cafeteria Room, Line 2 Depot, Santolan, Pasig City at 1:00 p.m. The BAC Secretariat shall receive sealed bids not later than November 17, 2005, 1:00 p.m., and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter at the Cafeteria Room, Line 2 Depot, Santolan, Pasig City.

LRT Administration has the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, without assuming any obligation whatsoever to inform interested parties of the bidder may incur in the preparation of its bids, and will entertain only such bids established to be the most advantageous to the LRTA.

Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

ITB No. 02-052-05R

The Light Rail Transit Authority (LRTA) invites duly licensed security agencies to apply for eligibility and to bid for:

BIDDING FOR THE SECURITY SERVICES CONTRACT OF LRT LINE 1 & 2 SYSTEM

AREA	BUDGET	CONTRACT PERIOD
1 Depot	PHP 11,124,480.00	12 Months
9 Revenue Line	PHP 54,288,336.00	12 Months

Bid Documents may be secured from the LRTA Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat at the Ground Floor, Administration Bldg., LRTA Compound, Aurora Blvd., Pasay City, Metro Manila, during regular office hours from October 3-10, 2005 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Three Thousand Pesos (P3,000.00) per area to be participated in by prospective bidders.

Site inspection will be held on October 11 & 19, 2005 at 11:00 a.m. For the purposes of monitoring teams, a pre-bid conference will be held on November 3, 2005 at the Cafeteria Room, Line 2 Depot, Santolan, Pasig City at 10:30 a.m. The BAC Secretariat shall receive sealed bids not later than November 17, 2005, 9:00 a.m., and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter at the Cafeteria Room, Line 2 Depot, Santolan, Pasig City.

LRTA reserves the rights to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, without assuming any obligation whatsoever to inform interested parties of the bidder may incur in the preparation of its bids, and will entertain only such bids established to be the most advantageous to the LRTA.

Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

Republic of the Philippines
City Government of Dumaguete
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
City Hall, Dumaguete City
Tel. Nos. (035) 225-1252

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1	Procurement of Bus Shelters				
2	Procurement of Computer Accessories for Dumaguete City Budget				
3	Supply, City Mayor, Barangay				
4	Supply, Dumaguete City Mayor				
5	Supply, Dumaguete City Mayor				
6	Supply, Dumaguete City Mayor				
7	Supply, Dumaguete City Mayor				
8	Supply, Dumaguete City Mayor				
9	Supply, Dumaguete City Mayor				
10	Supply, Dumaguete City Mayor				

Prospective bidders should have completed, within the period specified in the BAC Secretariat, a similar contract and have the capacity to submit the required bid security. Interested bidders may obtain further information from the BAC Secretariat and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below during office hours from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be acquired by interested bidders on the dates given below from the given address and upon payment of the applicable fee for the Bidding Documents, pursuant to the latest Guidelines issued by the GPPB, in the amount stated below. Bids must be delivered on the date and time specified below at the same address. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in the form and amount stated in the Bidding Documents. Bid opening shall be on the date and time specified below at the same address. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend. The Bids and Awards Committee reserves the right to reject any and all bids, declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Posting of Invitation to Bid	September 19, 2005
2. Issuance of Bidding Documents	September 19 - 30, 2005
3. Pre-Bid Conference	September 21, 2005
4. Deadline for Submission and Receipt of Bids	October 3, 2005
5. Opening of Bids	October 3, 2005
6. Post-qualification	October 3 - 7, 2005
7. Bids and Awards Committee Resolution	October 10, 2005
8. Notice of Award	October 11, 2005
9. Contract Signing	October 12 - 14, 2005

The Bids and Awards Committee reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

Signature
Engr. Jerrome Ann Jose De Santos
BAC Secretariat

SC admits to having been duped

THE SUPREME COURT, IN A rare admission, said it had fallen victim to a legal trickery in the last few years, with no less than the Presidential Commission on Good Government feeling the dodgy maneuver on the country's lost land justice.

"We were ... misled in issuing the TRO," the SC Third Division said, referring to a March 20, 2000 temporary restraining order that is issued against a Sandiganbayan decision approving the Ramos-era compromise agreement between Malacañang/PCGG and the late Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. Enterprises.

The high court's admission was contained in a resolution it made public earlier this week, in which it denied a fresh PCGG appeal—originally filed by the Estrada-era PCGG—to stop the Ramos-sanctioned compromise agreement involving the Philcomsat Group.

With the SC now upholding the compromise agreement, ERC nominee led by Mike Arroyo's cousin Benito Araneta, a holdover Eraj nominee, will take control of the cash-rich Philcomsat group.

"In fact, even before the petition in these cases was filed, the implementation of the compromise judgment had (already) been partially effected" by then PCGG Chair Magdangal Elma, the SC Third Division noted.

"This was never mentioned in their petitions," the SC Third Division added, referring to the petitions filed by the Estrada-era PCGG and two sequestered private companies against the Sandiganbayan.

The fleshy five-year old TRO was issued "by the authority of" Justice Jose Melo, then chair of the Third Division, whose other members included Jose Vitug, Artemio Panganiban and Fidel Purisima, father of resigned GMA Socio-economic Czar Purisima.

The Supreme Court at that time was folding its annual summer session in Baguio City.

"In any case, the TRO has become moot and academic, the same having no more legal force as the act sought to be restrained had been partially implemented and considering our decision in this case," the present Third Division said.

The present Third Division is composed of Justices Artemio Panganiban (chair), Angelina Sandoval-Gutierrez, Renato Corona, Conchita Carpio Morales and Cancio Garcia.

Panganiban took no part in the present as well as the 2000 deliberations, explaining that he had been a "former counsel of a party in the case of origin."

One of the counsels of the private firms that the Third Division said had misled it was identified as Rene A.V. Saguisag, the former Cory Aquino spokesman (sense) counsel for deposed President Estrada.

Ironically, because of the 2000 TRO and the ensuing squabble

(CONTINUED ON B2)

COCKTALES

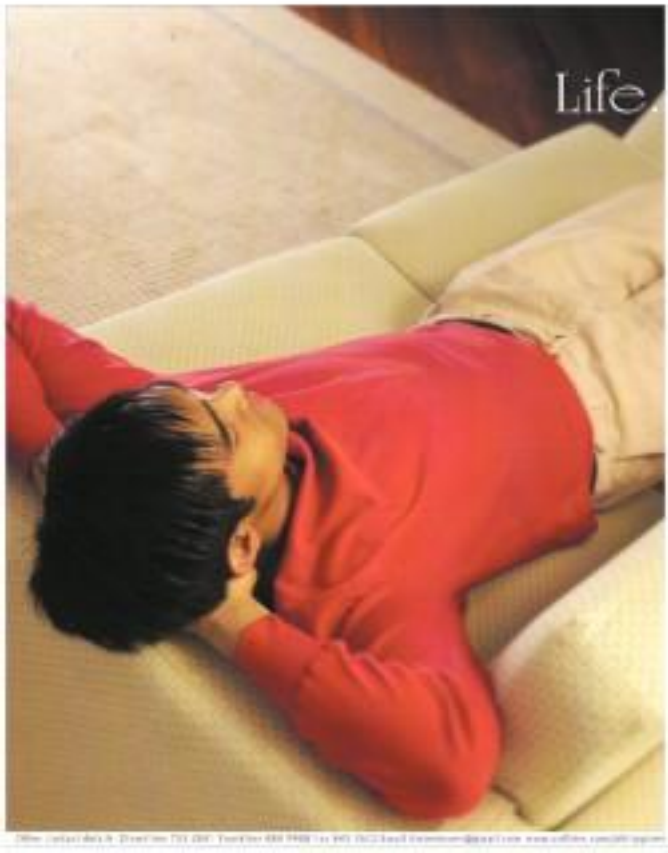
Victor C. Aguado

Admission is Free

NEW PRODUCTS USA 2005 / MULTI STATE INTERNATIONAL CATALOG EXHIBITION

September 30-31, 2005
10:00 am to 6:00 pm

Rotunda 1 & 2, Solaire Resort Las Vegas Casino, Parañaque City



Time.

Allow us to share the valuable moments.
Feel the excitement of what lies ahead
and take on this amazing journey
as we reveal your investment of a lifetime.

Be with us on September 30
Fraser Place Forbes Town Manila
Investors and brokers are welcome.

Continue to experience the same impeccable service from the same people behind Fraser Place. It's hospitality at its finest.

Call 753 2137

BSP move does little to aid peso

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas' (bsp) 25-basis-point hike in overnight repo fee does little to perk up the peso, which even weakened to 56.22 yesterday before firming up to 56.205 against the US dollar.

The local currency closed only slightly stronger versus Thursday's finish at 56.145-.81 at the Philippine Dealing System, even as the US dollar weakened in Asian trades in the afternoon.

Currency traders said the BSP's increase in key policy rates for the second time this year was already discounted by the market, which is now more weighed down by heavy corporate demand as well as other global concerns like runaway oil prices and adverse weather conditions in the US.

"The other countries have also tightened—like the US, Thailand and Indonesia—so the (interest rate) differential is thin," said a member of the Monetary Board, the BSP's policy-making body.

Aside from warding off inflationary pressures arising from recovery oil prices, the BSP also wanted to protect the local currency from speculative attacks, the MB member said.

The US Federal Reserve had taken a series of increases in interest rates even before the BSP did. Ramon del Rosario Universal Bank chief strategist Jonathan Ravelas said the BSP's recent hikes merely offset rate increases tightening.

"There's import demand and at the same time, the US Fed has already increased its rates, so the net effect (on foreign exchange) is zero, while external factors linger, such as high crude oil prices and disruptions manifest in the Gulf of Mexico," Ravelas said.

Ravelas said the peso would likely be locked in range trading between 56.1538 and 56.20 to the US dollar next week.

The central bank also said as soon as the MSP to further raise interest rates by at least 25 basis points within the year, possibly by November, or when the US Fed tightens its own rates again.

A MANUFACTURING technician checks the die attached to a machine at Pic'Technologies Holdings Inc. The country's supplies about 10 percent of the world's semiconductor manufacturing services needs, including mobile phone chips and micro processors. The firms based in the Philippines are now facing an increasing threat from China.

IT ventures drive up ecozone investments by 3.5% to P32B

By Hannel W. Dantingo

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY projects drove up investments committed to the country's economic zones by 3.5% percent in the first eight months to P32.8 billion from P31.7 billion in the same period last year, the Philippine Economic Zone Authority yesterday reported.

The August alone, PEZA said, approved projects reached a total of P5.30 billion. This was 384 percent higher than the P946 million registered from January to August of 2004.

Information technology projects accounted for almost a quarter of the August approvals at P1.12 billion. This was 222 percent higher than the investments approved in August 2004.

In the first eight months, IT-related investments reached almost P6.4 billion to expand outlay, or 15.6 percent higher than the P4.8 billion period last year.

Of the P32.8 billion worth of investments registered in the first eight months, P16.9 billion would come from tenants, while P5.89 billion would be from ecozone developers.

Peza said the new locator investments that were given the go-ahead in August were expected to bring in nearly 1,000 employees, an average of $389.5 million. The investments are expected to generate 6,883 direct jobs.

Approved ecozone projects registered with the chief of the year up to Aug. 31 so far account for 20,275 new jobs, excluding those that would be created indirectly.

World Bank unit earmarks $120M for RP projects

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCE CORP, the private sector arm of the World Bank, has set aside at least $120 million to fund various projects in the country beginning this year.

This is higher than the $102-million loan it committed to the Philippines during the previous fiscal year ending in June.

The allotment will be used to fund infrastructure projects. A portion will be set aside to assist housing, banking and credit-rating firms, as well as the local telecommunications and small and medium enterprise sector, IFC country manager Vipul Bhagat said yesterday.

The IFC has stakes in three banks. In line with its plan to consolidate its banking industry, the IFC is urging the three banks to merge, Bhagat said in a press conference.

IFC has invested 18 percent equity in Metro Enterprise Bank of the Philippines, a thrift bank in Cebu.

It also has a 7.5 percent stake in Banco de Oro Universal Bank equivalent to one board seat.

In 2000, IFC invested over P1 billion in equity in Hunters Development Bank.

IFC and Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corp.-owned Metrobank Group.

Bhagat also said that the World Bank unit fully supports the possible merger between BPI and Equitable PCIBank, the third largest bank in the country.

During the past fiscal year ending on June 30, the IFC provided financing for five projects worth $102 million.

+$11-million went to the Cagayan Electric Power and Light Company, the country's fourth largest private electricity distribution company, serving nearly 92,000 customers in northern Mindanao.

+Some $12.5 million in loans were to Eastwood Cyber One Corp. for the expansion of its office space in Eastwood City.

+$20 million went to a special purpose vehicle, the Robinsons Housing Inc., to refinance the delinquent loans of the Banyad Home Mortgage Finance Corp.;

+$1.5 million to quasi-equity investment went to a holding company owned by Paramount Life and General Insurance Company, a Filipino owned insurance company to help the firm expand its operations;

+the remainder went to Filinvest Land Inc. to extend low-cost housing and mortgage financing to lower and middle income buyers.

CAP gets . . .

Turn to page B3

ed it would be unable to service its debts as they fell due since it had more liabilities than assets. Based on its audited financial statements as of end-December 2004, CAP had P14.6-million in cash, or much lower than its total liabilities worth P5.1 billion. Its liabilities include obligations to about 374,000 time holders worth P1.2 billion for the first semester of school year 2005-2006.

CAP had said it was not in a position to service its debts to both creditors and plan holders if prospects surface of a huge capital development plan to build up its capital to P8.36 billion and its trust fund to P1.636 billion.

CAP further said outstanding obligations to its corporate creditors and plan holders for the school year 2005-2006 amounted for the bulk of claims against it.

Its trust fund was valued at P6.75 billion as of July 31 2005. Of the amount, only P651 million or 9 percent was liquid.

CAP argued that having it to sell and liquidate some of its ecozone parcels, including the 30-hectare site that close to meet its present obligations would result in huge losses to its trust fund.

The company blamed the following for its financial woes: the deregulation of tuition fees in the early 1990s; the effect of the East Asian financial crisis on its trust fund investments; the implementation of accounting standards that were perceived after that of the mandatory reshaping and the refusal of the SEC to renew its dealer's license.

Cocktails

Turn to page B3

between two competing boards, the Mahavonong movement led by dissidents have been able to continue to distribute the boards of supervised Philippine Commercial Banking Corp. and its publicly-listed subsidiary, Philcomsat Holdings.

Even with the ouster of Ilarraza, Asiacom, now in partnership with URM investor, Enrique "Henry" Lanzas, still holds away with the Philcomsat meeting with their camp claiming that the recent Supreme Court decision is still "not yet final and executory."

From being an intruder notorious, Asiacom has as well emerged as an "independent" director, possibly over the publicly-listed Philcomsat Holdings as chair.

Editor's note: Mr. Apostol is referred by officials to the Bangko Sentral's Web site to have viewed the publication of the particular column in the internet of two

Money-go-round

+ THE DELGADO family has finally taken control of Asiacom telecom franchise in Subic and neighboring islands, with Jose Marcelo Delgado himself giving a pep talk to cheering employees on Sept. 23.

+ THE SOPHISTS, which has a happy problem in the Philippines in its second full Manila-Bangkok flights, unveiled its new logo and corporate colors at the Bicol Hotel last night and, hopefully, enticed intrepid Filipino travel agents to try the airline's new Moscow flight as well.

Heard through the grapevine

PYRIDO, a listing to multinational muscle to stop the Department of Health from allowing Ecolab to release a Philippine version of Virogra, which is due out next month and will sell for half the price of Viiarr's famous blue pill.

Email: mabolo_pi@philstar.net or cocktails_pi@philstar.com

'05 BOP surplus

Turn to page B3

the economy and the rest of the world. Its major components are the current account and the capital and financial account.

The current account records exports of goods and services as well as cash transfers, such as home-migrant workers.

For the full year, the BSP expects a current account surplus of $1.04 billion, up from $1.1 billion in the last account. However, the capital and financial account is seen to post a lower surplus of $393 million, as against the $1.6 billion surplus in January to June.

The BSP expected last December its exports declined significantly in the second quarter to reach $6.6 billion due to the transfer of a major company's high-end product manufacturing line to China. Despite this, exports of electronic products posted a 1.2-percent growth for the six-month period on higher exports of semiconductor devices and components.

The favorable BOP development led to the increase in the BSP's gross international reserves, including the reserve position in the International Monetary Fund, to $17.7 billion as of end-June, up by 9.2 percent from the end-December 2004 level of $16.2 billion.

SATURDAY Special

JD tops 'Rock Star' tilt

By Nestor U. Torre

LAST WEDNESDAY'S "Rock Star" grand finals got off to a challenging start when surviving finalists Marty, MIG and JD were asked to provide lyrics for new songs written by the INXS band's Andrew Ferris.

The three survivors sensed that the session was an important test, because it would indicate which one of them would work best with INXS, not just as a performer but also in the musical songwriting department.

Both Marty and JD had never penned lyrics to the stories prepared. In particular, MIG was cited for his "strong sense of songwriting identity," one point for "star" her.

JD: To sing on INXS' new album and forthcoming world tour.

Discipline

On the other hand, JD was lauded for being unprepared. Border-sighed, "Passion is OK, but he needs more discipline, actually sitting down and doing it, instead of just thinking about it." Ouch.

But, the biggest test was still to come. Each finalist was told to perform one of the many rock classics featured on the show for the past 12 weeks. MIG chose "Evolution (Hopeful)," the number he had ceded to Darie some weeks ago.

He performed it with great spirit and feeling, too, so his backers felt he could win the all, especially since Marty and JD opted to perform less spectacular numbers.

But, it was not to be. After penning 88K in high listeners, the INXS jurors decided to let go of him, leaving only Marty and JD to battle it out for the title.

Blizzard of votes

Before he bowed out, MIG thanked in particular his fans in Australia and the Philippines, who had supported him with a veritable blizzard of votes.

As for JD and Marty, they were given a final test that vividly showed which one of them would work best with INXS. They each performed a rock number with the band!

Strangely enough, this final phase of the competition had an ironic effect on us. After weeks of performing brilliantly alone, now that they were with INXS, both JD and Marty melted away into the band, seemingly "swallowed up" by the more experienced bandmates' performance. From a high-stake competition, "Rock Star" became merely work as usual. That was a real letdown!

Best part

It told us that the best part of "Rock Star" was the search, and winning and performing with INXS on its new album and world tour were rather an anti-climax. In a way, we were glad that MIG was spared that disquieting denouement...

Oh, yes, what was the band's verdict? The INXS jurors chose JD. Marty was disappointed, naturally, but his spirits soared soon after when the INXS headmasters hinted that they would ask him to join "Rock" for them on their forthcoming world tour, along with JD!

So, our "closest" expressed last Wednesday that more than one of the three surviving finalists would be hired by the INXS band has become reality! Too bad's that "star" MIG wasn't among the super-lucky two. . .

Balanced mix in 'OC' soundtrack

By Nestor Torre

FOR A TV SERIES THAT HAS straddle-of-the-road written all over it, "The O.C." (short for "Orange County") has surprisingly re-come up with surprisingly off-the-beaten-path soundtracks. The show's fourth soundtrack collection, "Music from the O.C.: Mix 4," is the most indie-sounding of them all, providing us with a rewarding experience that is certainly more interesting than watching the actual show.

Glamorous beats

Scenes of shiny, glamorous teens getting all passionate and angsty are a dime a dozen on TV/land, after all. ...But, The Futureheads, Fiftiesh, Modest Mouse, and The Bolshoi Gestalt? Yes, don't even have them on many

Moving on

LOTUS POND

E. Valencia and S. Alamzarr

HOW DOES ONE SURVIVE A BROKEN RELAtionship? Sages share important lessons to get over a traumatic relationship, and help us become more mature and happy in life. Angad Kam, buddhism-inspired, imparts these nuggets of wisdom:

1. "We are but sticks floating in the river of time. Today we are together; tomorrow we are thrown apart." The materialistic world is full of changes; conditions and relationships are temporary. We have to accept this reality of life.

Preference

2. "We don't control people's hearts and lives." Although we may have our preference for how we want people to be, we are not in control. Even God, who is the Supreme Controller, does not force people to love or surrender to him. He respects free will. Unconditional love means respecting people's decisions on a fundamental.

3. "When one chapter in your life closes, move on to the next chapter." There is no sense in clinging to the past. Life goes on, and so should we.

4. "Does the negative have a positive?" What may initially appear to be a disaster can be a chance for greater opportunities. Focus on higher spiritual goals—maybe serve to the Supreme Being, and work for the welfare of His children.

Best friend

5. "The Supreme Person is your best friend. He will never reject nor abandon you. He loves you unconditionally, eternally."

Rejection may be a constant in this world, but our best friend will never reject us—he's just waiting for us to turn to Him!

Ryan, Bianca enjoy team-up

By Jocelyn Valle

"Y SPEAK" HOSTS RYAN AGONCILLO AND Bianca Gonzalez looked uncomfortable as they taped their debate show's first anniversary episode. Their outfits weren't matched like they usually are.

"Hindi kami bonding ngayon," he told us. It's strange. Ryan and Bianca were among the pair, (the) who were tasked to take sides on the topic of the day: Love. They had their respective "cupid-ized" selves with them as testimonies—Judy Ann Santos took Ryan to Lino Cayetano.

Idea

"It was our producer's idea," said Bianca. "Since had the worst time since he was not really sure this kind of thing...dyuang bya ayun." In contrast, Ryan and Judy were comfortable talking about their relationship.

"It was quick and painless," Ryan stated, referring to the interview and Santos had to pronounce their name "Mahirap Ma Kiss" as "Da Kiss."

But, the hosts would rather investigate debate among their guests. "It's great to hear different opinions from young people, because our show encourages their active participation," Bianca added.

Ryan hastened to point out, though, that they were not out to change the world. They simply want to alter the perception that today's young stars don't care, and that they don't have a voice.

Comfortable

Ryan is comfortable working with Bianca. Aside from "Y Speak," which is aired Sunday nights on Studio 23, she was also co-host (Season 2) "Magandang Umaga, Pilipinas," alongside Julius Babao and Tintin Bersola.

She don't particularly was forged more than a year ago when Pia Guanio left for GMA-7, Bianca, a TV real-point of model whose brother JC Gonzalez is network celebrity on "Bawal Ito," was tapped to replace Guanio. So far, it's been a fulfilling journey for the two.

movies rocks, let alone mainstream TV. But there again, hallelujaro culture can incorporate everything.

We don't have to be a fan of the three to enjoy the music. In any case, it's doubtful whether these songs actually lend more significance than merely being backgrounders for the show's introspective scenes. Still, they're definitely a welcome change from the usual over-drenched ballad-core heart in soaps.

As proof of the show's—and its soundtrack's—ever-growing popularity, fresh "Seasonettes" is debuting in this disc, an ear pop-punk The Futureheads' "Decent Days and Nights," "Considerate and Co." from Imogen Heap (half of Frou Frou), and Mary Pond Silicone of the Guess classic, "Champagne Supernova."

Predecessors

"Mix 4" is not quite as perky as its predecessors, but the bounce is still there. There's nothing livelier than the opening track, "Because Days and Nights," A.F. Stevenson's "On the Table," and the quirky "The View" from Modest Mouse. They are among the mix's best tracks, but the less bubbly and more thoughtful material also holds up well.

Those include Scottish band Belmiller Seamen's "Gamestarts," Frederick's "Footsteps," and Jeffries Inverted "Feels Alone With You." They sit well with the more pop-sounding tunes, and the result is a balanced mix.

Problem

If this album has a problem, it's the fact that it's three hours. You'll find the better tracks in the upper third of the listing, with songs like the rather underappreciated "Hardcore Days and Softcore Nights" by Aqueduct.

The collection ends with a double whammy: the forgettable "Eric The Apple of My Eye" by Bell X1 and a worthless rendition of "Champagne Supernova."

Still, you'll find yourself more pleasantly surprised than disappointed with the album. "The O.C." may not be something you'd want to watch, but you can always close your eyes...or tune for the next compilation.

"MUSIC FROM THE O.C.: MIX 4." More interesting than watching the actual show.

'Ilusyon's' 'A' boosts digital filmmaking

By Nestor U. Torre

LAST WEEK, THE DIGITAL FILM, "Ilusyon," got the top grade of 'A' from the Cinema Evaluation Board, ranking it in 100-percent release or announcement rates when it's shown in the cinemas or the video circuit.

The 'A' that "Ilusyon" got was heartwarming tidbits of digital films, some of whom thought that the CEB favored mainstream movies. Not true. The board seeks to recognize, encourage and reward quality movies—whether 35 mm or digital.

Fine showing

It's likely that "Ilusyon's" fine showing at the CEB will encourage other new filmmakers to shoot digital features, which will cultivate and energize the fast-paching local film scene.

We have that "Ilusyon" will be entered in the Gawad-sa-Manila (best mm) month, or you can catch it in theater and see for yourself why the CEB gave it its highest grade.

PARKER. A scene from Paolo Villaluna and Ellen Ramos' movie.

The film stars Kit Jacinto and Jayson Parker.

("Ilusyon" is only the second film to get an 'A' from the CEB this year, after "Li Nou Lova.")

Another heartwarming development on the digital film scene this month is the screening at the Promenade in Greenhills of seven of the nine features produced for the Cinemalaya Showcase Film Festival some months ago.

The three-week screening will enable film buffs who missed the Cinemalaya movies' CCP and UP screenings to finally catch them as the cream will push Promenade Cineplex.

Only five of the Cinemalaya films are being shown starting Sept. 28. Two of the nine) for the selected lotry by a major film complex.

Screening schedule

Lucky here film winners, "Repat Artists," by Jiro del Mundo, the Cinemalaya films will have this screening schedule:

Sept. 28, 11 noon, short films: "Mimicry," "Rubia," "Blood Bank," "Bahala," "Pinoypinoy," and best short narrative winner, "Matsoyan." 2:40 p.m., "Repat Artists." 5 p.m., "ICE Bed #7" by Rico Arevalo. 7:30 p.m., "Room Boy" by Aloysius Adlawan. 10:15 p.m., "Sarong Banggi" by Sherwood delos Cruz.

Sept. 29, 2:40 p.m., "Room Boy." 5 p.m., "Sarong Banggi." 10:15 p.m., "Ismet" by Michael Angelo Empleado.

Sept. 30, 12 noon, "Repat Artists." 2:40 p.m., "ICE bed #7." 7:30 p.m., short films 10:15 p.m., "Room Boy."

Oct. 1, 12 noon, short films. 2:40 p.m., "Ismet." 5 p.m., "Repat Artists." 7:30 p.m., "ICE Bed #7."

Oct. 2, 12 noon, short films. 2:40 p.m., "Repat Artists." 5 p.m., "Room Boy." 7:30 p.m., "Sarong Banggi."

Oct. 3, 12 noon, "Room Boy." 5 p.m., "Ismet." 10:15 p.m., "ICE Bed #7."

Oct. 4, 12 noon, "ICE Bed #7." 2:40 p.m., "Sarong Banggi." 7:30 p.m., "Ismet." 10:15 p.m., "Repat Artists."

Do pencester these films? Call 722-4446.

Fil-Am quartet makes waves in the US

By Jocelyn Valle

"MUSIC IS A KEY POINT FOR Filipinos in the US," notes Andrew Silva of the San Francisco, California pop quartet, Silva Dio. "In fact, everybody we know owns a Magic mike in house," with the boundaries, Jesse Hicks, referring to the girl-get cherished by midnight-shi-sound Pinoys.

Places

Two other members, Gene Mallare and Ami Penida, observe that every other Fil-Am youth has a band. In fact, they all belonged to different groups, including Xus, which is arguably the most successful Fil-Am musical group in the US, before they formed this Dec. 2002, and named even in a gig in New York just six days after.

"They got offers from several labels, but chose E Real Records, which recently released their debut album, 'Because Stars Today'."

"Through the guys dig a variety of music types and styles, they refuse to have a soft spot for OPM. "I grew up listening to my father singing the songs of Rodolfo Aguilar and Rico J. Puno," Hicks recalls with fondness. "It really got me into music. My influences include Opm all-stuff."

They can also Heard every by the inbox of their fanbalayan, whom they see on TV through MIO-OBO. The Filipino Underand and on concert tours. "We saw Lani Misalucha once in Chicago. She's awesome," they gush in unison. "Ryan Cayabyab is also great. We got to work with him just before we came here."

Bids

They also supported fellow Fil-Am Jhenine Tria and Camille Velasco's bids to become the Binibining Pilipinas Universal 2005.

They are likewise proud of Black Eyed Peas member Apl, who hails from Pampanga. "Did you know that his Kapalso song, 'Sexture,' is getting a lot of airplay in the US?," Andrey asks.

Margaret O'Brien, movie tyke of the '40s

By Bobo Cervantes

WHEN I STARTED WATCHING MOVIES, films by Temple was merely a nonentity doll for me. Of course, I knew who she was, but it wasn't until later that I saw her films. Indeed, I was impressed by the cute, curly blonde with the petulant smile.

The child star of my time was really a child-hearted escapist with a penchant for keeping it! Shirley was the epitome of cute, Margaret O'Brien possessed a tragic quality for which reason her films often had scenes where she would quietly weep, thus she gained the sadness of tragedy.

Special Oscar

In fact, she was so effective that she was awarded a special Oscar. The MGM child star was considered by many as the best child actress of her day. In "Meet Me in St. Louis," for example, she stole scenes from the legendary Judy Garland!

Margaret was born Angela Maureen O'Brien on Jan. 15, 1937. The charming young girl made her first film at age four in "Babes in Bonnets." O'Brien was cast in musicals and dramas, although she was more appreciated for her dramatic prowess. She had the cute-girl qualities of Temple and the dramatic depth of Greta Garbo.

In "Little Women," she was pitted against Jane Allyson, Elizabeth Taylor and Janet Leigh, with Mary Astor portraying their quietly suffering mother. As expected, Margaret stole every scene.

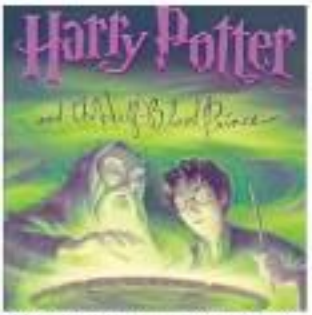
However, she did not succeed in her bid to mature into young adult roles. Although she acted in films as an adolescent, she did not make the smooth transition to Perfect Ild. Like many child stars, she didn't grow tall enough—the usual follow-the-leat.

Predictable

In the '50s, she started to predictable teeny-bopper films like "Her First Romance" and "Glory." Incidentally, she came to the Philippines as representative of the American Girl Bonnet. In 1960, she was cast in "Pork Barrel," starring Sophia Loren, and then that "Annabelle Lee" in Peru in 1972. Her last film was "Nuts" in 1991.

Of course, she remained active on television and in the theater circuit. She is remembered alongside Garland, Jane Kelly, Joan Fontaine, Greer Garson and Walter Pidgeon. But, her adult colleagues remember her as "the best little thespian ever to salute the screen!"

O'BRIEN. Grabs scenes from Judy Garland in "Meet Me in St. Louis."



J.K. ROWLING'S sixth book in the popular children's series is dark and tragic.

Feeling of doom permeates 'Half-Blood Prince'

By Nestor Torre

TO THOSE FOR OUT THERE WHO HAVE yet to read 'Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince,' Aaa! no!. This review contains no spoilers. Not much, anyway. To say more, the have-but-this-book would be the series' darkest yet (and that somebody important Will Die) had been made known to the public months before printing even began.

The sixth and penultimate book in J.K. Rowling's hugely popular Harry Potter series, 'Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince' is dark, indeed, and at the end, even tragic. There is a passage right near the end that (without the how—and) contributing—direction the series has taken ever since the first significant death occurred in 'Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire.'

Realization

Here, Harry comes to the realization that 'he must abandon forever the illusion he ought to have lost at the age of one: That the shelter of a parent's arms meant that nothing could hurt him. There was no undoing from his nightmare, no comforting whisper in the dark that he was safe really, that it was all his imagination...'

That may sound rosy, but then, so is the situation. It has been so from the very beginning, in fact. If you remember, the first book, 'Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone,' told us how Harry's parents were murdered by the greatest dark wizard in the history of magic, who had tried—and failed—to kill the then one-year-old Harry.

It's not an opposites feeling, however—more like the deep breath taken before the plunge. It's also about the often painful process of growing up. It may come as a surprise to those who still see Harry and friends as kids, but they're already 16 and 17 years old in Book Six—and Rowling doesn't forget to include that hormones and in tense their angst.

Lighthearted

The first three books, however, were largely lighthearted and characterized by Rowling's deft, comedic style. The fun is still present in 'Half-Blood Prince,' but there's a feeling of doom just waiting 'round the corner.

It's not an oppressive feeling, however—more like the deep breath taken before the plunge. It's also about the often painful process of growing up. It may come as a surprise to those who still see Harry and friends as kids, but they're already 16 and 17 years old in Book Six—and Rowling doesn't forget to include that hormones and in tense their angst.

Connection

That connection to reality is evident in other aspects, as well. The book, for one, begins in the office of the Muggle Prime Minister, who is beset with problems that have spilled over from the magical world. The Ministry of Magic also bears a resemblance to the sort of governmental service bureaucracy and muscle-(or neither—the sort that makes indiscriminate attacks just to save face.

And, of course, there's also a war...but, the war that is about to commence in the community of wizards is drawn at close lines, very much unlike the current ambiguity of the real world's wars.

The starkly drawn line between Good and Evil—and Right and Wrong—has always been one of the main attractions that Harry Potter's world has had for today's readers, both young and old. Even ants between characters doing left and right, there is still this certainty that keeps Harry's world together.

It's a certainty that helps tone up a story that, in some, may have become too dark and heavy. Nevertheless, the book makes for pretty enjoyable reading, and despite the plot's tendency to ramble, it is much better indeed than last year's rather incoherent "Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix." Now, we'll just have to wait for Book Seven.

New faces brighten TV-film screens

By Nestor U. Torre

EVANGELISTA Communication Group.

PATRICIA EVANGELISTA has (her) master weaves abroad, when she hosted 16 other contestants and won the International Public Speaking Contest in London.

Her proud country men quickly made their appreciation felt, and Patricia became a media favorite. Now, she's on the media side of things herself, as a co-host of Studio 23's "Breakfast Superstars!" and MNC's "Tara Na, Pinoy!"

And she's been tapped as one of the new endorsers of the new PLDT myDSL School Plan 99, a fast Internet connection great for multi-tasking and quickly getting one's homework done.

Free speech

In all of her activities, communication is key to Patricia. She observes, "Free speech holds a lot of responsibilities. She fights for against prejudice and trying to correct mistakes.

"The Internet has made it easier to communicate in many ways. It knocks down borders of time and distance, and allows us reach more to be done than before. I look for speed and accessibility in my internet provider. That's why, the moment I got PLDT myDSL, I never looked anywhere else!

In the movies, Amber Valletta co-stars with Jason Statham in the hit-paced action film, "Transporter 2." She plays a woman whose child has been kidnapped and injected with a new virus. When she acquires fail, in reason for use, she is forced to work with Statham's character, and they take matters into their own hands.

Beauty and charisma

Valletta began modeling in Europe when she was only 15. Her beauty and charisma soon attracted the attention of movie producers, who cast her in the Harrison Ford-Michelle Pfeiffer movie, "What Lies Beneath."

She really came into her own in "Hitch," where she co-starred with Will Smith. Her performance in the "Transporter 2" is evidence of a maturity that has blossomed to a wider realization.

For her part, Dutch actress Rutger McGinnis makes her Hollywood debut in "Dream Ripper: European Exploits," opposite Hi-Am actor Nah Johnsohn. She plays Eve Stonebrook, the "special" woman who makes Dream get over the loss of his wife.

What makes Eve so special? She suffers from obsessive-compulsive disorder! Hence takes full advantage of the situations calling possibilities of her unusual role, making sure to emphasize the strange symptoms of the mental disorder with her beauty, sweet innocence and natural flair for comedy.

Title role

Finally, in "The Secretary of Emily Starr," Jennifer Carpenter plays the plum title role of the young student who becomes the subject of an overtures that results in her death, leading to a high profile investigation of the priest who performed the exorcism on her.

In the film, Emily (Jess Carpenter) leaves her sheltered rural home to attend college. She has no inkling what awaits her there. Alone in the dorm one night, she has her first terrifying "hallucination" and blackout.

As her attacks become more frequent and severe, Emily, a devout Catholic, chooses to undergo an exorcism conducted by the parish priest. When the young girl dies, the priest is charged with negligent homicide.